# THE STORY OF THE PHARAOHS

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# THE STORY OF THE PHARAOHS

BY

REV. JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.

WITH 32 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS,
49 ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT, AND TWO MAPS

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

MY MOTHER

# PREFACE

Some apology may be necessary for such a venture as the adding of another to the numerous Histories of Egypt already in existence. Within the last few years the literature of the subject has been enriched by the publication of large and important works by such authorities as Professors Maspero, Flinders Petrie, and Breasted, and Dr. Wallis Budge. But the very scale and importance of these works fit them more for the service of the student than for the information of the general reader, and it is perhaps possible that a less exhaustive treatment of the subject may have its advantages.

I have therefore endeavoured to tell the Story of the Pharaohs on a scale which, while admitting of the inclusion of all details of importance, excludes all matters which are not necessary to the continuity of the narrative and the due understanding of the interrelation of its parts. Particular attention has been given to the remarkable and interesting results of modern archæological investigation in so far as these bear upon the various epochs of Egyptian history, and it is hoped that the

volume will be found to embody the latest conclusions which have been reached with any reasonable degree of certainty.

The period covered extends from the earliest beginnings of Egyptian history down to the Persian Conquest, when the independent existence of the nation ceased; and an attempt has been made to summarize the leading tendencies and achievements in literature and art of the Old Kingdom and Empire Periods. The chapter on 'The Religion of Ancient Egypt' is necessarily but the briefest sketch of a vast subject—a sketch from which all but what seemed the most essential points have had to be excluded. The reader who wishes to fill in the outline must turn to such works as those of Wiedemann, Erman, and Steindorff.

A detailed record of sources is needless; but I have to acknowledge indebtedness to the important Histories already mentioned, and especially to the work of Sir Flinders Petrie. In addition to these and other histories of earlier date, I have endeavoured to avail myself of all accessible sources of information, and my debt has been particularly great to the many publications of the Egypt Exploration Fund and Egyptian Research Account. In this connection I desire to acknowledge help kindly afforded to me by the late Rev. James Kennedy, D.D., New College, Edinburgh, and the Rev. W. S. Matheson, M.A., Galashiels.

The illustrations have been chosen with the view of representing the best and most characteristic Egyptian work in art and architecture.

# Preface

All the plates, with three exceptions, have been reproduced from photographs by kind permission of Signor Gaetano Piromali, Luqsor.

The illustrations in the text are mostly reproduced from Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' but I have to acknowledge the kindness of Sir F. Petrie in granting permission to use Figs. 1, 2, and 3, as well as Plate XXI., and of the authorities of the Egypt Exploration Fund in allowing the use of Fig. 22 (from 'El-Amarna,' iii.); while for the drawings used in Fig. 3, and Figs. 41 to 49 inclusive, I am indebted to my wife.

---

## *NOTE TO THIRD EDITION*

*SINCE the appearance of the First and Second Editions of this short history of the Pharaohs, the number of extant histories of Egypt on a great scale has been increased by the publication of the first volume of Mr. A. E. P. Weigall's 'History of the Pharaohs,' which carries the story of Ancient Egypt down to the close of the Eleventh Dynasty. Among the great galleons of Maspero, Petrie, Breasted, Budge, and Weigall, however, 'The Story of the Pharaohs,' small skiff though it be, seems to have found its own place and its own modest usefulness.*

*Accordingly, in preparing the Third Edition, no attempt has been made to interfere beyond what was absolutely necessary with the course of a narrative which, within its own limits, appears to have fulfilled its purpose. Alterations in the text have been confined to such corrections and modifications of statement as were needed to bring the story into line with*

*modern knowledge, while the additional matter which has been provided by post-war excavation has been discussed in a chapter specially written for this edition, where also will be found short summaries of such views and theories as, being still under discussion and matters of controversy, could not be introduced in the course of a plain narrative of events.*

*Some apology may be expected for the retention of certain forms of Egyptian royal names which are not those met with in various modern works. Within the last thirty years, these names have undergone so many metamorphoses that one is chary of attempting to keep pace with their kaleidoscopic variations. One of the most famous of royal names occurs as Thothmes, Tahutmes, Tahutimes, Dhutmes, Thothmosis, Tothmosis, Tuthmosis, Thutmose, Dhutmose, to name only those which come unsought to memory; while the hero or villain of the Amarna Tragedy has appeared as Chueneten, Chu'eneten, Khuenaten, Akhenaten, Akhenaton, Ikhenaton, Ikhnaton, Okhnaton, and Ekhneten, with all sorts of different accents sprinkled variously over the different varieties of either name. When a permanent and uniform nomenclature is adopted, and adhered to for more than six months, revision will possibly become imperative. Till then, one version of a name seems pretty much as good as another, so long as you know what monarch is in question.*

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# The Story of the Pharaohs

## A Short History of Ancient Egypt

### CHAPTER I

#### THE LAND AND ITS EARLY INHABITANTS

The land of Egypt, the home of a civilization which, in many respects, is the most wonderful that the world has ever seen, itself presents characteristics which are sufficiently remarkable, and which account to some extent for the peculiar development of the great race which inhabited it in historic times. Like many lands which have played a great part in the world's history, Egypt is a comparatively small country. Its length, from the Mediterranean to the first cataract of the Nile at Aswan, where Egypt proper ends, covers about $7\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of latitude; but its breadth is altogether disproportionate. For the Egypt in which men can live and work is not the rectangular enclosure with which we are familiar in the maps of geographers; it is merely the narrow channel which the Nile has cleft for itself, during the course of ages, through the limestone rock which underlies the soil from a point a little north of the first cataract to the Delta.

Egypt has been compared to a lily with a crooked stem;

and the comparison, while perhaps a little fanciful, is not altogether inapt. The crooked stem is the Nile, winding northward in the trench which it is ever digging through the alluvial deposit which it is as constantly renewing. This stem expands, at about a hundred miles from the sea, into the broad blossom of the Delta, which is simply a vast deposit of Nile mud with which the great river has filled up an ancient bay of the Mediterranean; while a little south of the Delta blossom the depression in the Libyan hills known as the Fayum forms a sort of bud upon the stem. From Aswan, where the river breaks through the most northerly of those rocky barriers which form the cataracts and obstruct its progress through Nubia, the Nile flows on, unbroken by either fall or rapid, in a deep and steady stream, whose maximum width is about 1,100 yards, and whose average speed is about three miles an hour. The valley which it has gradually excavated is narrow. At some points it contracts to a breadth of only a mile or two, while its greatest breadth does not exceed thirty miles. It is bordered on the west by the limestone plateau of Libya, from which the desert wastes of the Great Sahara roll away in endless waves of sand; while on the east another line of hills, more rugged and imposing, and rising at some points to a height of 5,000 or 6,000 feet, lies between the river and the Red Sea. This range is cleft by several ravines giving access to the Red Sea littoral, one of which, the Wady Hammamat, was in ancient times the great avenue of Egyptian trade to the south, while its rocky walls furnished one of the sources from which the Pharaohs drew the stone required for their vast building operations. By this pass, also, they obtained access to those parts of the eastern hills which yielded gold and other precious metals. The two ranges of hills terminate in escarpments, whose average height is from 600 to 1,000 feet; and between

these rocky walls there lies on either side of the river the narrow strip of alluvial soil which is really the land of Egypt.

Between the 29th and 30th degrees of north latitude the western wall recedes, forming the depression of the Fayum already mentioned; while a little above the 30th degree the mountains on both sides of the river terminate, and the broad expanse of the Delta begins. A sharp division is thus drawn between the two parts of the country. The narrow valley of Upper Egypt is quite distinct from the broad flats of the Delta, and this division was, as we shall see, reflected in the history of the nation from its earliest period, and has left its traces in the terms which the Egyptians applied to their country. The King of Egypt was 'Lord of the Two Lands,' Upper and Lower Egypt, the Nile Valley and the Delta. He wore at times the White Crown of Upper Egypt, and on other occasions the Red Crown of Lower Egypt; while, to complete the insignia of royalty, both were combined to form the curious double crown so often represented on the monuments. Thus, also, in the earlier history of the nation, each division had its own system of government, with its own Treasury department and staff—the Red House of the Treasury for the Delta, and the White House for Upper Egypt; and though this division passed away as the government became more centralized, the traces of it still lingered in the titles of some of the great officials.

Owing to its peculiar configuration, the land of Egypt was singularly isolated. On the east and west the deserts practically cut it off from intercourse with other peoples. On the south, intercourse with the Nubian tribes, though practicable enough, was restricted in volume by the cataracts, and was always carefully regulated by the government. Only on the north-western and north-eastern

edges of the Delta did there exist open channels of communication, with the Libyans on the one hand, and with the Semites of Syria on the other; and it was from these points that most of the outside influences which told upon the Egyptian nation were always exerted, and from them that war and conquest occasionally threatened the land. Further, the length and narrowness of the country tended to accentuate the individuality of the various districts. The inhabitants of any given district had neighbours only on two sides of them, and these the shortest boundaries of their territory. Accordingly, centralized government was always more or less difficult, and there was a constant tendency towards division into various petty principalities; while the seat of government repeatedly shifted as the chiefs of one or other of the principalities rose into power sufficient to enable them to assert a temporary dominion over the whole land. Thus Egypt had various capitals at various stages of her long history, the seat of government being now at Memphis, now at Thebes, or, again, at Sais; while her various dynasties were named by her historian, Manetho, after the towns or principalities from which they sprang.

All this would appear to suggest a land naturally most unfitted to take a great place in the history of the world. But the disadvantages of Egypt's peculiar configuration were more than atoned for by her remarkable advantages. Of these, the chief were the extraordinary fertility of her soil and the equableness of her climate. Egypt is an almost rainless land. Rain, indeed, is not uncommon in the region of the Delta, and even in the upper valley occasional showers occur; but for by far the greater part of the year rain is unknown. This seeming disadvantage is, however, amply compensated by the annual inundation caused by the rising of the Nile. This great river receives during its long course of nearly 4,000 miles only two

tributaries of any importance. The main stream, or White Nile, is joined at Khartum by the Blue Nile, while its volume is again increased somewhat further north by the influx of the Atbara. Swollen by the rains which fall in February in the lake district of the Equator, the volume of the main stream is further reinforced by the floods which the Blue Nile and the Atbara bring down from the melting snows of the Abyssinian hills; and these floods carry in suspension an enormous amount of earthy matter. The river begins to rise in June; by the middle of July it has reached flood-height; and whenever the depth of water is judged sufficient to submerge the land adequately, the sluices of the dykes which regulate the inundation are opened, and the water spreads over the low lands, gradually submerging them until it reaches the edge of the desert. 'Egypt is then one sheet of turbid water spreading between two lines of rock and sand, flecked with green and black spots where there are towns or where the ground rises, and divided into irregular compartments by raised roads connecting the villages.'

In September the flood begins to subside, and though there is sometimes a fresh rise in October, it does not last for long, and by December the river has once more resumed the limits of its natural channel. But in its fall it has left behind it the earthy deposit which its tributaries brought down from the Abyssinian hills, and the land, its surface thus annually renewed by the life-giving river, seems almost inexhaustible in its fertility. Egypt has thus, from time immemorial, been capable of supporting a population out of all proportion to its area. The habitable land of the country does not greatly exceed 10,000 square miles—a rather less area than that of Belgium; but at the present time it supports a population of about 9,000,000 souls, and even in Roman times the population was not less than 7,000,000—numbers which

represent a density of peopling much in excess of any other country.

Certain other consequences follow upon the conditions thus created by the Nile. Egypt always has been, and always will be, a country mainly dependent upon agriculture; and the character of its agriculture is such that, from the very earliest period, it must have demanded a certain amount of organization and mutual dependence among its people. For the inundation, though so beneficial, requires careful regulation if it is to produce its maximum effect, or even if it is to be prevented from causing widespread destruction; while as the river sinks again below the flood-level, an elaborate system of irrigation has to be resorted to in order to convey the fertilizing water to those fields which lie at a higher level. Thus, at a very early stage of his history, the Egyptian became familiar with all the large and complicated engineering problems connected with a national system of irrigation—a 'manager of the inundation' appears as a government official as early as the second reign of the First Dynasty—and it is probably to this source that we may trace that mechanical ingenuity, and that tireless persistence in labour and skill in organizing it, which enabled the Pharaohs to rear those great works which are still the wonder of all beholders.

Further, the Nile has in all ages served as the natural and convenient means of communication between the widely separated portions of the straggling country through which it runs. During the greater part of the year the prevalent north-west wind is strong enough to carry a boat against the current of the river under sail alone; and if the sail be lowered, the current is sufficiently rapid to make the return voyage downstream easy. Thus transit was simplified—a matter of inestimable importance in such a land, and especially for the building operations of

the Pharaohs, in which huge masses of stone had often to be transported for great distances.

The Egyptian, moreover, enjoyed a climate which is probably the most equable in the world. The mean winter temperature of the Delta is 56° F., that of the valley 66° F. The summer temperature of the valley sometimes rises as high as 122°, but even then the heat is far from being so oppressive as might have been expected, for the air is so dry and pure that no great amount of discomfort is caused even by excessive heat. The nights are always cool, and altogether the climate is one of unsurpassed healthiness. It is to this dryness of the atmosphere that we owe the preservation of those innumerable relics of a great civilization which have made the ancient Egyptian so interesting a figure to the present age. Objects such as delicate papyri, which would have utterly perished in moister climates, have there been preserved for many centuries in the dry soil, while the mummified bodies of the kings and great men of the land have survived in such condition that it is easily possible to realize the actual living appearance of most of the notable figures of Egyptian history.

The land itself presents no very remarkable or attractive features. Its great defect is, and seemingly always has been—at least, in historic times—the lack of timber. The scenery of the contracted valley is singularly monotonous. The level strip of green plain stretches on unbroken for mile upon mile, sharply bordered by bare and featureless hills, which roll off into the desert wastes to east and west. Sometimes the border between the desert and the fertile soil is drawn so clean that the wayfarer may stand with one foot in rich vegetation and the other in barren sand. Such an environment, so completely isolated, so monotonous, and so closely hemmed in by bare and lifeless wastes, produced its

inevitable influence upon the spirit of the race. The stamp of their strange country is plainly to be seen upon the mental characteristics of the ancient Egyptians. Their great river was so much the dominant feature of their world that their terms for north and south were 'downstream and upstream.' The sharp distinction between the black soil of the Nile Valley and the red sand of the desert gave them the terms by which they distinguished between their own land and other countries. Egypt was 'the black land'; all other countries were 'the red lands.' In spite, however, of the monotony of their dwelling-place and the sternness of its limits, there is no sufficient ground for the traditional representation of the Egyptians as an excessively solemn, not to say morose and gloomy, people. On the contrary, they appear to have been a gay and light-hearted race, with a childlike delight in the simpler pleasures of life. In religion alone, the influence of a stern environment betrays itself; and the picturesque and beautiful imaginings which clustered round the gods of the Greek Pantheon are strongly contrasted with the somewhat dull and prosaic legends which the Egyptian attached to his innumerable divinities.

The uninviting boundaries of the land served, however, a more useful purpose than that of straitening the spiritual horizon of its inhabitants. They were rich in the materials necessary for those enormous structures which Pharaoh after Pharaoh delighted to rear to the glory of the gods, or of his own name. Limestone of the finest and most durable quality, such as that which originally formed the casing of the Great Pyramid, was obtained in abundance from the quarries at Turah and elsewhere. Porphyries and breccias were also found plentifully in various localities, while the rocks of Aswan, at the first cataract, yielded an inexhaustible supply of beautiful granite. In the use of these stones, and particu-

larly in the working of the harder among them, such as granite and diorite, the Egyptian early attained to a skill and mastery which has seldom been approached, and never surpassed. His ability in handling huge masses of stone, evidenced by the erection of single blocks weighing, as in the case of the obelisks, several hundred or, as in that of the colossal granite statue of Ramses II. at Thebes, even a thousand tons, excites the wonder of all engineers. Many of the statues of the kings, and particularly those of very early date, such as the diorite statue of Khafra (Fourth Dynasty), are hewn out of their iron-hard material with a cleanness and sureness, and a knowledge both of the advantages and the limitations of the stone employed, which are alike extraordinary. The lengthy hieroglyphic inscriptions which record the names and deeds of the Pharaohs are cut to a considerable depth with a sharpness and precision of outline which almost equals gem-cutting; and from the very earliest periods there have come down to us bowls and other vessels of the hardest stone, where the intractable material has been wrought to such a degree of fineness and thinness that the vessels are translucent.

Thus the climate, the characteristic rocks of his surrounding hills, and his own patient genius and skill, have conspired to enable the Egyptian to leave us records of his great past which exceed in abundance and importance those of any other race. Even in the Delta, where the conditions were somewhat less favourable than in the valley, where the storms of war burst more frequently, and where the relics of the past have been gradually entombed by the constant accumulation of fresh layers of Nile mud, much remains; and the gigantic temples, with their colonnades, colossi, and obelisks, and the magnificent rock-tombs of Upper Egypt, present to us the evidences of past grandeur and artistic power in an

abundance elsewhere unexampled. So it has become possible to reconstruct, not from the somewhat fanciful accounts of the Greek tourists who visited the land in the time of its decadence, but from the actual contemporary records, that Story of the Pharaohs which it is the object of the following pages to unfold in brief outline.

The earliest inhabitants of Egypt belonged to a period so far removed from historic times that almost every memorial of them has absolutely perished. In their day the land must have been in a condition differing very much from its present state. The ravines which lead down from the hills to the Nile Valley bear evidence of a time when rain must have been frequent and heavy. The land, therefore, had then, in all probability, a much greater extent of fertile soil than in historic times. The area of the plateau behind the cliffs which enclose the valley was habitable and inhabited, instead of being, as it now is, a barren waste. But the men who occupied it in that remote period have no history for us. Their only record is to be traced in the numbers of chipped flint implements and weapons which they have left behind them, and of which specimens are occasionally found to-day strewing the surface of the desert. They were succeeded, in times which are still prehistoric, by a race of which we have more ample and varied relics. The forefathers of the ancient Egyptians had affinities, on the one hand, with the Libyan tribes of North Africa, who were white-skinned and possibly of European origin, and, on the other, with such African tribes as the Somalis and Gallas. This already mixed race received, in prehistoric times, the addition of a further important element by the incursion of a people of Semitic origin. The traces of this invasion are to be seen in the language, which presents unmistakable Semitic affinities. But the already existing civilization of the land proved more persistent

than the nomadic civilization of the Semitic conquerors, and the language is the only evidence now left of their intrusion into the Egyptian stock.

Thus the race was already a very composite one. Professor Petrie, indeed, maintains that five distinct elements can be traced in the pre-dynastic population, and that these were all finally mastered by a sixth, the true dynastic race of Egypt, which, entering the Upper Valley from Koptos, gradually dominated the whole land, and finally succeeded, under Mena, the first of the dynastic rulers, in fusing all its elements into one people. Till within the last few years nothing was known of the civilization of this early pre-dynastic race; but of late many graves belonging to them have been discovered and opened, and it is possible to reconstruct a rough outline of the conditions under which they lived. Apparently they were a dark-haired race, wearing a somewhat scanty minimum of clothing, and occasionally tattooing parts of the body. They were by no means savages. They lived in houses made of wattle and mud, ate their food by means of ivory spoons, and hunted the wild beasts of their land with weapons of flint, which are the most cunningly and skilfully wrought of any that have been left by any race whatsoever. They produced red and black glazed pottery, which, though not wrought on the wheel, is of good shape, and also another type, which displays considerable taste in its incised geometrical patterns. That they were not merely agriculturists and hunters, but had developed skill sufficient to build vessels adequate for trade and warfare on the Nile waters, or for coasting voyages in the Mediterranean, is shown by representations, preserved on a number of articles of pottery, of large galleys rowed by many oars, carrying a couple of huts or cabins amidships, and decorated with what appear to be rude ensigns or banners. The use

of the sail, though not common, was not unknown, as is shown by the picture of a boat with a large square sail on a vase preserved in the British Museum.

The graves of this pre-dynastic race, from which all the materials for the reconstruction of their civilization have been derived, exhibit a type of sepulture differing from that of dynastic times. The body was laid upon its side in a contracted posture, the knees drawn up, and the hands often placed before the face. Occasionally the flesh was separated from the bones before interment, and in some cases the body had been subjected to the action of fire before being placed in the grave. Along with the deceased were deposited various articles for his use in the world beyond—pieces of pottery for holding his food and drink; flint weapons; clay models of various articles, including boats; materials for amusement, as in the case of a set of ninepins found in a child's grave; and particularly a kind of palette for grinding face-paint, the green malachite for the making of which is placed in a leather bag beside the body, or held in its hands. The remains were sometimes laid upon a mat of plaited rushes, and the tomb was covered over with brushwood; or, in some instances, a huge bowl of rude pottery was inverted over the body, a form of interment which survived into the dynastic period. In these early tombs no traces of mummification can be observed; but already invocations and prayers to the gods of the underworld had come into use, fragments of which are found incorporated in the Pyramid Texts of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties more than 1,000 years later. Some rude form of writing the pre-dynastic race evidently possessed, otherwise these funeral texts could not have been handed down; and, moreover, it is obviously impossible that the system of hieroglyphics, which is found in a state of considerable development under the earliest dynastic kings, should

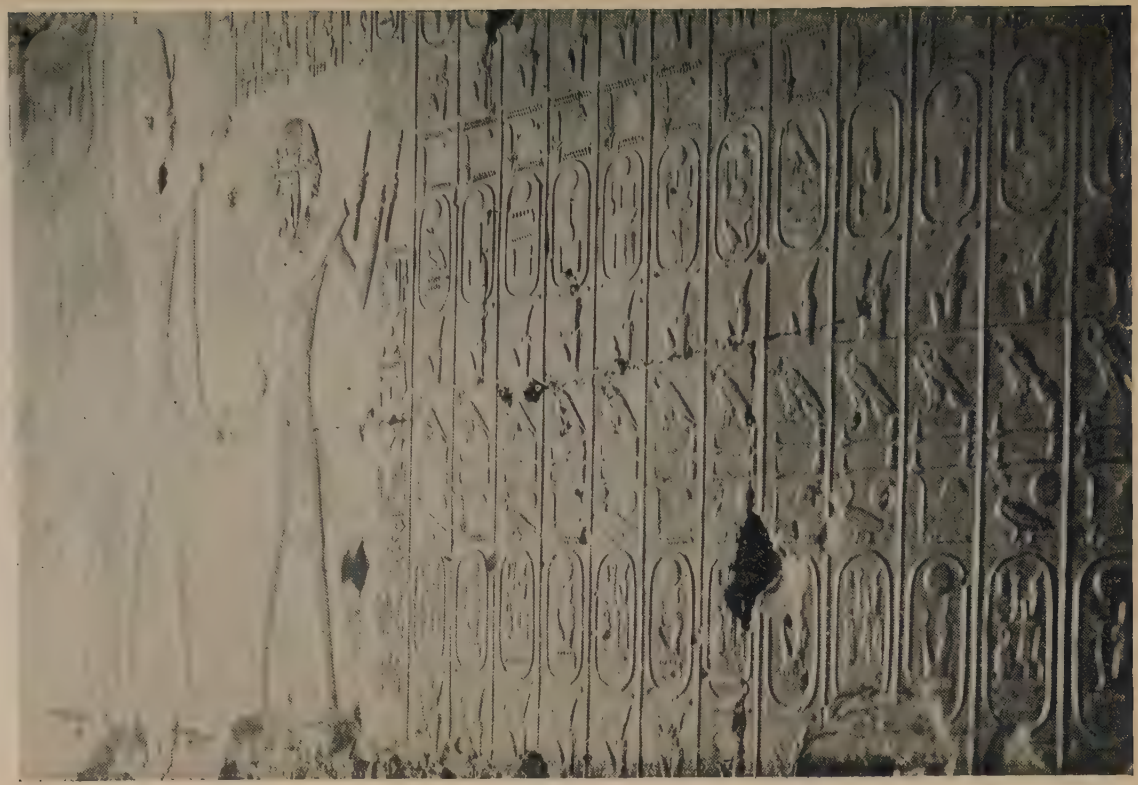
have sprung into use all at once. It can only have been the result of centuries of previous attempts at writing, which must be attributed to these prehistoric Egyptians.

The process by which this ancient race and its conquerors were gradually fused together, from being a mere cluster of bickering tribes, into two well-defined kingdoms —one of the Delta and one of the Upper Valley—is entirely unknown, and will probably remain so for ever. Already, when the earliest records are met with, we are confronted by the two kingdoms definitely in existence, and engaged in making war upon one another. On a very early slate palette there is a representation of a number of fortified towns being assaulted by various animals and birds, who pick the walls to pieces by means of hoes. Professor Petrie interprets this as a record of the conquest of Middle Egypt and the Delta by the united tribes of Upper Egypt, the birds and animals being the ensigns of the southern tribes.

Of the kings who ruled in this time of strife and confusion, only a few names have come down to us— Ka, Ro, Zeser, Zar, Nar-mer, and Sma. Of Zar, 'the Scorpion King,' there has survived a great carved mace-head and some vases. Nar-mer, possibly his successor, has left somewhat more significant remains which bear traces of his work of conquest and consolidation. On a mace-head which bears a representation of a festival of his reign it is recorded that he captured 120,000 captives, 400,000 oxen, and 1,422,000 goats. Some of the captives are depicted doing homage or dancing before the king. A fine slate palette of Nar-mer gives a somewhat similar picture. On the one side of it the conqueror, wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt, goes to view a number of decapitated enemies, while at the foot of the scene he is depicted as a bull breaking into a fortified town and goring a prostrate opponent; on the other side (Fig. 1)

he is represented, wearing the White Crown of the Upper Kingdom, in the act of smiting with his mace an enemy who is described as the 'ua she,' or 'chief of the lake,' a designation which probably indicates that Nar-mer had conquered the district of the Fayum. Another of these early monarchs bears the name 'Sma,' 'the uniter,' which may possibly signify that he was the ruler who consolidated Nar-mer's conquests, and drew the two kingdoms together in preparation for the first king of united Egypt, the great Mena, to whom the Egyptians always looked back as the true founder of their nation.

With Mena we emerge from the haze, where our only clue is that of inference from a few trifling relics, into the region of actual history. Yet it is only within the last few years that it has become possible to say this. In the Egyptian history of Manetho, the position of first king of the First Dynasty is assigned to 'Menes,' of whom it is affirmed that he belonged to the town of Thinis, in Upper Egypt, and that after a reign of sixty-two years he was slain by a hippopotamus. Other traditions recount that he united the two lands and established his capital at Memphis, diverting the Nile from its former course by means of a vast dam in order to gain ground for his purpose. All these statements, however, are of late date, and as no traces existed of the evidence on which they were based, their historic character was questioned, and the very existence of 'Menes' was considered doubtful. So late as 1887, Rawlinson was obliged to write: 'Probably we shall do best to acquiesce in the judgment of Dr. Birch: "Menes must be placed among those founders of monarchies whose personal existence a severe and enlightened criticism doubts or denies."' Facts, nevertheless, have entirely vindicated the personal existence of Mena and the traditions as to his importance. The recent researches of Petrie, De Morgan, Garstang, and others, at Abydos,



TABLET OF KINGS, ABYDOS.

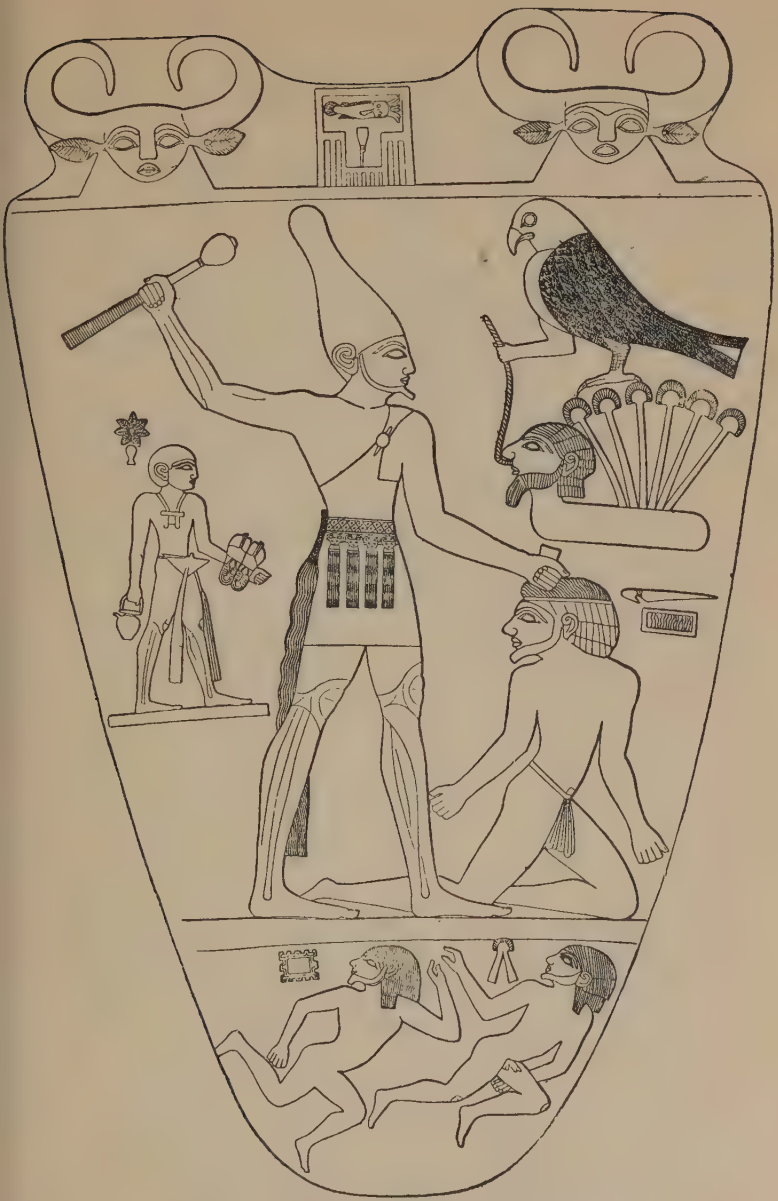


FIG. 1.—SLATE PALETTE OF NAR-MER.
(From *Hierakonpolis*, by J. E. Quibell.)

Naqada, and elsewhere, have resulted in the discovery of a number of tombs belonging to the kings of the earliest dynasties, and among them the tomb of Mena has been found at Abydos, near to his native city of Thinis, while that of his queen, Neit-hotep, has been excavated at Naqada. These tombs have yielded ivory and ebony labels bearing Mena's name, and inscribed with archaic forms of hieroglyphic writing and with representations of the king in the act of sacrificing (Fig. 2). A gold bar, of unknown use, but resembling the bar found at Gezer by Mr. Stewart MacAlister, also bears his name; and these articles, together with stone vases and clay sealings of the reign, prove that Mena was not merely a shadowy legendary founder, but a real and actual king, and suggest that in all probability the other traditions connected with his name are well founded, and that he actually accomplished the consolidation of the work which Narmer and Sma had begun.* Mena's tomb at Abydos is a large brick-lined pit with props along the sides to support an inner lining of wood. In front of it are two other graves, one that of his daughter Bener-ab ('Sweet-heart'); while thirty-four graves in three rows beside it appear to have belonged to the king's household.

The royal tombs from which these remarkable and significant relics have been obtained are much advanced in style from the graves of the pre-dynastic age. The simple pit has now become an oblong enclosure of considerable size, sometimes with a stairway leading down into it. It is generally lined with brick, and in some cases, as in that of Mena, there is an inner lining of wood.

* The question of the personality of Mena and of several other early kings is still unsettled. For a short statement of present views as to the founders of the Egyptian monarchy, see Chapter XVIII.

FIG. 2.—EBONY TABLET OF MENA.

(From *Royal Tombs*, by W. M. F. Petrie.)

Stone occurs in the form of a granite floor in the tomb of King Den-Setui ; and that of the last king of the Second

Dynasty is solidly built of limestone—the earliest stone structure in the world.

From the furniture and utensils, and the articles of personal adornment which were buried along with these ancient monarchs, it has become possible to gain some idea of this early civilization, and of the position which it had attained in the arts and crafts, and in the organization of the resources of the kingdom. The result is sufficiently surprising. Already, in spite of the almost incredibly early date of these tombs (Petrie puts the beginnings of the First Dynasty at 5510 B.C., Breasted at 3400 B.C.), the Egyptian had reached a skill in design and workmanship which enabled him to make his furniture and utensils objects of considerable beauty. The vessels for the king's household use are finely carved out of alabaster and other beautiful stones, while handsome copper pots are also found. The remains of furniture are scanty, but they are sufficient to show that cabinets inlaid with ivory and ebony were in use in the royal palace; while the legs of a seat, carved out of ivory in imitation of those of a bull, show remarkable skill in workmanship. Perhaps most astonishing of all is the evidence of complete mastery of the goldsmith's craft, which survives in the shape of four bracelets found on the skeleton arm of the queen of King Zer, Mena's immediate successor. The design of these adornments, and the skill with which the gold is wrought and soldered, are alike admirable. Hieroglyphic writing was coming into common use. At the beginning of the First Dynasty its use is comparatively restricted; by the middle of the same period it is the regular means of communication; by the end of the dynasty it has become so common that the figures are already degraded and carelessly engraved.

A State religion has begun to make its appearance. King Mena makes his offering of gold-silver alloy 'for the

fourth time,' and we may infer that the function of first priest of the kingdom was already, as in later days, attached to the royal office. The names of the great gods are those familiar to us from later records. Osiris and Set, Horus, Anubis, and several others, together with the goddesses Neit and Hathor, are already prominent, and the priestly organization was fully regulated and divided into courses. The great god of the united kingdom appears to have been Horus, who occupies the position subsequently held by Ra, and later still by Amen. The worship of Horus was carefully maintained during the period covered by the first two dynasties. Subsequently it fell off in importance, and that of Ra began to rise into prominence.

No buildings, save the tombs, have survived, but the annals record the drafting of temple plans, and the granite jamb for a temple gateway at Hierakonpolis, together with the entire construction of the tomb of King Khasekhemui out of limestone, show that great progress had been made in that art in which Egypt was finally to excel all other nations. The art of portraiture in the round is only represented as yet by two examples, but these, portrait-statues of King Khasekhem, show considerable mastery of the problem of delicate modelling in hard material. These statues record on their bases a victory of Khasekhem, in which there were slain 'northern enemies, 47,209.' These may have been some of the Libyan tribes invading the Delta, as they did so frequently in later times.

Her internal conflicts over, Egypt was beginning to stretch out the hand of conquest towards the south and east. Mena extended the limits of the kingdom on the south from Silsileh to Aswan. The turquoise and copper mines of the Sinai Peninsula drew Egyptian expeditions to that inhospitable land during many cen-

turies, and the exploitation of its treasures had begun as far back as the First Dynasty. The earliest of the famous series of inscribed tablets on the rocks of the Wady Maghareh (and the only one now remaining *in situ*, the others having been removed to Cairo for safety) is one of Semerkhet, or Mersekha, seventh king of the First Dynasty, in which all the conventional features of those boastful reliefs in which the Egyptian monarchs recorded their prowess are already present (Fig. 3).

FIG. 3.—ROCK TABLET OF SEMERKHET, WADY MAGHAREH, SINAI.
(From *Researches in Sinai*, by W. M. F. Petrie.)

The king is represented in three postures. In one he is smiting a Bedawy chief; in the other two he stands in the attitude adopted by Egyptian sculptors almost exclusively throughout the course of the national history. He wears alternately the White and the Red Crowns; his chin is adorned with the artificial beard worn by all subsequent Pharaohs, and his garment terminates behind in a tail—relic of still earlier days when prehistoric hunters clad themselves in the skins of the beasts which they had slain. The art of this earliest of large sculptures is simple, but strong

and bold; the few hieroglyphics employed are cleanly and surely cut; and the whole tablet compares favourably with those of later dates.

By the end of the First Dynasty, the organization of the kingdom had reached a high stage of development. Under Nar-mer and Mena there is mention of the office of Chamberlain; in the reign of Zer, Mena's successor, we have a 'Commander of the Inundation,' a proof of the early date at which the importance of this matter had been recognized; under Zet there is a 'Commander of the Elders'; while King Merneit has a 'Keeper of the Wine'—a very early representative of 'Pharaoh's chief butler'—and in the same reign the first list of the districts or 'nomes' of Egypt is found. Later in the same dynasty appear the Royal Seal-bearer, the Royal Architect, and the Keeper of the King's Vineyards; while the growth of a regular aristocracy, with the consequent development of all the minutiæ of Court ceremonial, is attested by the appearance of a Leader of the Peers and a Master of Ceremonies. Careful supervision of the Royal accounts was apparently exercised; a scribe's account in hieratic script occurs on a potsherd belonging to the third reign of this dynasty, and under the Second Dynasty we have such titles as 'Royal Sealer of all Deeds,' 'Scribe of Accounts of Provisions,' and 'Sealer of Northern Tribute.'

Thus the remarkable discoveries of the last few years have revealed not only the historical reality of the early kings of Egypt, but also the fact that the nation had already reached a high stage of civilization, and was in possession of a fully organized system of government. In a sense, these relics all go to show that the early history of Egypt is not the strange enigma which it appeared to be not so very long ago. Its beginnings can be traced, if only in the roughest outline as yet, and

we can see that Egypt followed the natural course of development which all other great nations have had to follow. Her wonderful civilization was not, as has been often suggested, a Minerva springing full-grown and completely armed into being; it was the gradual growth of many centuries of patient effort on the part of pioneers whose greatness the Egyptians of later ages rightly, and by a true instinct, revered, though possibly their knowledge of them may have been even scantier than our own. In another sense, however, the wonder of the splendid civilization of the Nile Valley has only been increased by the disclosure of the fact that its rise and development are so much more ancient than was believed a few years ago to be the case. The emergence from the mists of the past of this ancient world, with its mighty kings, its ordered courts, and its highly organized government, is surely one of the most dramatic surprises which the progress of scientific investigation has presented to the modern mind.

## CHAPTER II

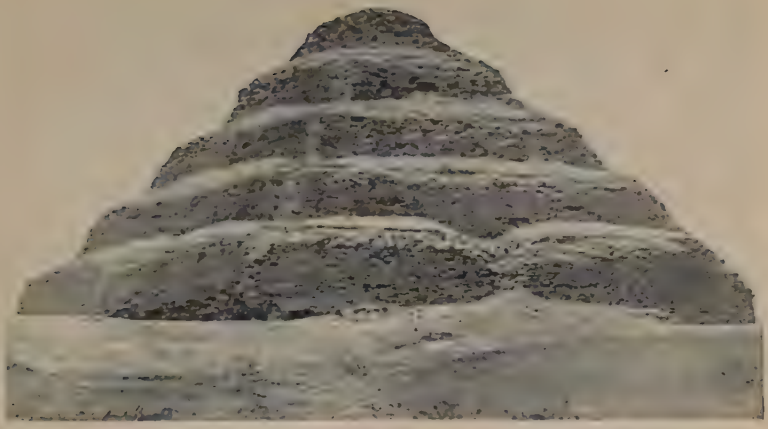
### THE PYRAMID-BUILDERS—DECLINE OF THE OLD KINGDOM

With the Third Dynasty we enter upon a new era in the history of Egypt. The Thinite princes of the First and Second Dynasties, who had been the creators of a united Egypt, are now superseded, and a new line appears, having its seat of government at Memphis, or 'White Wall,' as the city was then called. It is not certain whether this new line forcibly usurped the throne, or acquired it by matrimonial alliance. According to Petrie, the face of Sa-nekht, the founder of the dynasty, as shown on his sculptured tablet at the Wady Maghareh, is of pronouncedly Ethiopian type; and it has been conjectured that the dynasty may have been founded by an Ethiopian conquest, as in the later instance of Piankhi's invasion. This, however, is uncertain, and at all events the Princess Hapenmaat, or Nemaathap, of the Thinite line, appears to have been the foundress-queen of the new Memphite Dynasty.

The first of the new line of rulers to leave any impression of power behind him is the king known as Zeser, or Neterkhet. This king became in after ages one of the great legendary figures of Egyptian history, to whom anything wonderful or out of the way was naturally ascribed. To him Manetho attributes the erection of the

first stone building in the world; and though, as we have seen, he was actually anticipated in this respect by King Khasekhemui, there seems little doubt that the tradition is so far correct that the reign of Zeser marks the beginning of regular construction in stone. The name of Zeser's great architect and adviser has come down to us. It was to Imhotep that the Egyptians looked back as the typical wise man of their race. He was considered to have been the founder of medicine, of law, of all manner of sciences; the Egyptian scribes poured libations to his name before beginning their work; and by the time the Greeks came into contact with Egypt he had been exalted into a god of learning and medicine—'Imouthis,' as the Greek travellers heard his name—in whom they recognized their own deity Asklepios. Though the legend no doubt exaggerates the achievements of Zeser's architect, yet it is probable that it also expresses a certain amount of truth, and that Imhotep was one of those great men who have rightly left upon the minds of their fellow-countrymen an impression far deeper than can be accounted for by any of their surviving works. At Bet-Khallaf Garstang has excavated a large tomb belonging to King Zeser. It is a great building of brick, nearly 300 feet in length by 150 in breadth and 30 in height, containing a long passage slanting downwards, and barred by six huge blocks of stone, which leads to several chambers more than 50 feet below the ground. It is probable, however, that Zeser was never buried here, but that the genius of Imhotep devised for his master a more stately resting-place in the well-known step pyramid of Saqqara (Plate III.), the first great stone structure of which any remains have survived to the present time. In this building we see the transition between the so-called 'mastaba' tombs of the earlier kings and the true pyramid form which is met with later.

Zeser's pyramid is really a mastaba which has been



1. STEP-PYRAMID, SAQQARA.
2. GREAT SPHINX, GIZEH.

added to stage by stage, each stage being less in size than that below it, until it approaches a roughly pyramidal form. The mass of the building is considerable. The east and west sides of the base measure 396 feet in length, and the north and south sides 352 feet, while the height is about 195 feet. Within the pyramid the chambers and corridors were lined with blue and green glazed tiles, bearing the king's name and titles. Zeser appears to have warred in the cataract region of the south. A late Ptolemaic forgery, inscribed upon the rocks at Sehel, professes to belong to him. It recounts how he endowed the god Khnum with a tract of land in the neighbourhood of the cataract in return for deliverance from a period of famine. Though the inscription is of late date, it may represent an authentic tradition, in which case Zeser's authority must have stretched further south than that of any of his predecessors. He has also left a tablet upon the rocks of the Wady Maghareh, in the Sinai Peninsula.

Of the six kings who followed Zeser practically nothing is known; but the last king of the Third Dynasty is a well-known historical figure. Sneferu is perhaps the most clearly seen of any of the early Egyptian monarchs up to this time. Like several of these ancient kings, he was revered as a god in later days; and the records of his reign which are extant show a very real advance in the power and civilization of the country. It is in this reign that we read of the first great ships being built by the Egyptians, one of them being specially mentioned as being 170 feet in length; while a coasting trade with Syria provided cedar-wood for the king's buildings. Sneferu's administration seems to have been vigorous and active. There are records of a war in the South, in which 7,000 human prisoners and 200,000 cattle were captured. In Sinai he left such marked traces of his power that he was looked

back to as the real founder of Egyptian influence in the Peninsula. His tablet in the Wady Maghareh gives the usual conventional picture of the King smiting a Bedawy chief; but in addition it has been shown that he was probably the founder of the miners' temple at Serabit-el-Khadem, where the remains of a votive hawk, carved in limestone and bearing his cartouche, have been found. When the kings of later date wish to express the greatness of their own exploits in the Peninsula, they assert that nothing like their deeds has been done since the days of Sneferu. The pyramid tomb of Sneferu at Medum has given rise to various conjectures, owing to its curious form. It appears, however, that it was originally of the usual mastaba type, but was subsequently enlarged by various additions, and finally covered over from top to bottom with a uniformly sloping casing of limestone, making it the first true pyramid. The outer casing has been long since quarried away, and only the original mastaba, with its additions, survives. In all probability the king had a second pyramid at Dahshur, perhaps the one with the curious double slope.

The nobles and great officials of the Court of Sneferu were buried near the king's pyramid at Medum, and it is from their tombs that the best idea can be obtained of the extraordinary state of development which Egyptian art had reached at this very early period. The most remarkable of these tombs are those of Rahotep and Nefermaat. From the former came the famous statues of Rahotep and his wife Nefert, which, all things considered, are among the very finest products of the Egyptian sculptor's art. The hieroglyphics of these tombs are also remarkable for the exquisite sharpness and clearness of their cutting. Altogether, the period of the Third Dynasty, as revealed in the relics which it has left to us, seems to have been a worthy preparation for the wonderful burst

of activity and power which meets us in the next dynasty —that of the Pyramid-Builders, properly so-called—and which continues through the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, gradually declining in the latter period towards the time of anarchy and confusion which follows.

Around the name of Sneferu there grew up the usual crop of legends. Of these, the most interesting, preserved in the Westcar Papyrus, tells how the king, being depressed, called in the wizard *Zaza*-em-ankh to suggest amusements to him. The wizard suggested a sail on the lake, and provided the king with a boat rowed by twenty beautiful girls, each of whom used a paddle of ebony inlaid with gold. While rowing, one of the girls lost a turquoise ornament overboard, and the king asked the wizard to recover it for her. Thereupon *Zaza*-em-ankh uttered certain words of power, at the sound of which the water of one half of the lake raised itself up and stood upon the other portion. The ornament being recovered, the magician reversed his incantation, and the waters resumed their former level. The story suggests certain resemblances to the most dramatic incident of the Exodus of Israel.

At the head of the new dynasty which succeeded to the throne of Sneferu appears the man who, of all Egyptian kings, is perhaps most familiar to the ordinary reader, by reason of the vast pyramid which he erected to be his tomb and to keep his name in everlasting remembrance.

> 'Let not a monument give you and me hopes,
> Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops,'

says Byron, in somewhat doggerel verse. At the same time the monument of Cheops, or rather of Khufu, which was the king's real name, has served its purpose fully as well as any work of human hands can ever be expected to do. To have been the author of the largest and most

marvellous building that the mind and hand of man ever planned and executed is no slight distinction.

Khufu appears not to have been of royal stock, but to have sprung from a provincial family in Middle Egypt, where a town was long named 'Menat-Khufu'—'The Nurse of Khufu.' By what means he rose to the throne is not ascertained. Sneferu's queen, Mertitefs, is found occupying a similar position in the establishment of Khufu, but otherwise the connection between the two dynasties cannot be traced. Like his predecessor, Khufu has his tablet in the Sinai Peninsula, with the usual representation of the smiting of a Bedawy chief; but it is the Great Pyramid which confers upon his reign its unique distinction. The fact that such an erection was possible reveals the power and the unquestioned authority of the man who could thus bend the resources of a whole nation to the construction of a monument whose sole use was to add to his own personal glory, while it is also a tribute to the wonderful skill with which the labour of the nation was organized and made available for a single purpose. No building, ancient or modern, is so widely known, or has commanded such an amount of interest and attention, as Khufu's gigantic mausoleum.

The figures which express its size may be briefly given. At present it measures about 755 feet in the greatest length of each of its sides at the base, and its height is 451 feet. Originally its sides were 20 feet longer, and it was about 30 feet higher. The limestone outer casing with which it was originally covered has been removed from it for other building purposes, leaving it roughly stepped from top to bottom. It has been calculated that the total weight of the stone employed in the building is close upon 6,000,000 tons; while the ground which it covers measures between 12 and 13 acres. Out of the stone of which the pyramid is constructed it would be

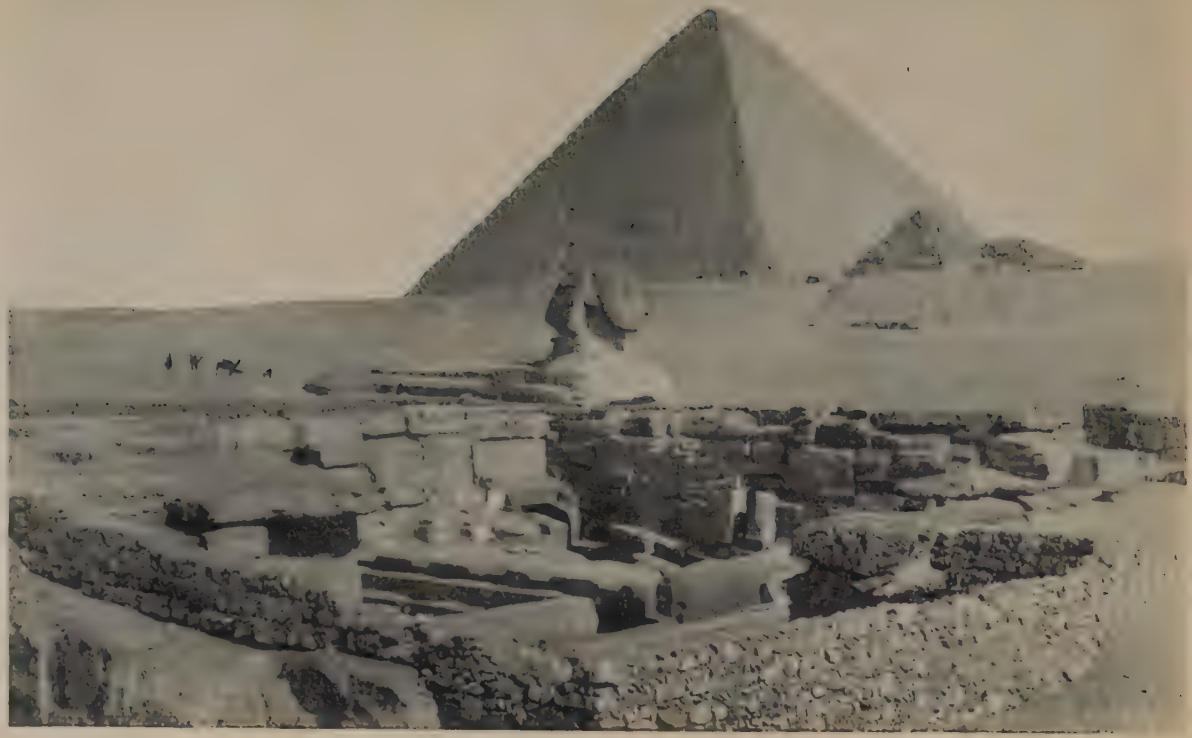
possible to build a town of substantial houses with accommodation for over 120,000 people.

The size of this vast monument is not, however, its only claim to notice. The fineness of the workmanship, the skill with which the building has been planned and oriented, and the precision of its levels, are all most extraordinary—'equal to optician's work of the present day,' says Petrie, 'but on a scale of acres instead of feet or yards of material.' 'The laying out of the base of the Great Pyramid of Khufu,' remarks the same authority, 'is a triumph of skill; its errors, both in length and in angles, could be covered by placing one's thumb on them. . . . The work of the casing-stones which remain is of the same class; the faces are so straight and truly square, that when the stones were built together the film of mortar left between them is on an average not thicker than one's thumb-nail, though the joint is a couple of yards long; and the levelling of them over long distances has not any larger errors. In the inside of the pyramid the same fine work is seen; the entrance-passage joints are in many cases barely visible when searched for; . . . in the king's chamber the granite courses have been dressed to a fine equality, not varying more than a straw's breadth in a furlong length of blocks.' Along with this wonderful accuracy, however, there coexist in some portions such curious evidences of carelessness or lack of skill as to suggest that the great mind which directed the work must have ceased to superintend it before it was completed.

The passages leading to the two internal chambers were closed, when finished, with huge plug-blocks of stone, and when the pyramid was cased from top to bottom with its original limestone covering, no trace of an entrance can have been visible. Herodotus states that the building of the Great Pyramid occupied the labour of 100,000 men

for twenty years, the labourers working in relays three months at a time; and Petrie has shown that this tradition is quite credible. The forced labour would be employed only during the period of the inundation, when ordinary work is at a standstill, and thus this enormous structure may have been reared without any great hardship to the nation at large. The barracks for the skilled masons, still traceable behind the second pyramid, might hold perhaps 4,000 men; and possibly this may be accepted as the maximum number of trained artificers employed, the other workmen being engaged in preparing the stones and bringing them to the spot. The material was hewn from quarries on the opposite side of the Nile, floated across during the time of the inundation, and dragged up to the pyramid over an enormous stone ramp, whose construction, according to Herodotus, was itself the labour of ten years. The king's granite sarcophagus in the larger chamber is empty, and the dust of the greatest builder of the world has for ages been scattered to the winds of heaven; but his monument bids fair to stand as long as the everlasting hills themselves, and to preserve the memory of his name to the latest generation of mankind.

Practically the story of Khufu's reign, as known to us, is the story of the building of the Great Pyramid. It appears, however, that he was active in other directions also, the alabaster quarry at Hat-nub, near Tell-el-Amarna, having been first opened by him. But the pyramid is in itself sufficient evidence of the strong hand with which he controlled the destinies of his nation. Such a feat of building could only have been possible when the State had reached a very high organization, and when the power of the monarch at its head was of the most absolute and autocratic type. 'In leaving the tomb of Khufu,' says Breasted, 'our admiration for the monument, whether stirred by its vast dimensions or by the fineness of its



GREAT PYRAMID, SPHINX, AND TEMPLE OF SPHINX.

masonry, should not obscure its real and final significance; for the Great Pyramid is the earliest and most impressive witness surviving from the ancient world to the final emergence of organized society from prehistoric chaos and local conflict, thus coming for the first time completely under the power of a far-reaching and comprehensive centralization effected by one controlling mind.' Whether this centralization was devoted to a worthy object may be another question. In estimating such a work, one has always to remember the tremendous importance attached by the Egyptian mind to the life after death and to the abode of the dead; but, even so, Khufu's conception of his own individual importance may seem somewhat over-strained and selfish.

The greatest of the pyramid-builders was probably succeeded by Khafra, the builder of the second pyramid, though it is possible that a King Ra-dad-ef, of whom practically nothing is known but his name, may have intervened. Khafra's pyramid is inferior in size to that of his predecessor, though if the Great Pyramid had never been built, the second would have been considered a world's wonder. In height it is but little inferior to its neighbour, but the length of its side is about 50 feet less. The workmanship is also poorer, though the lowermost course of the outer casing was of red granite instead of limestone. Close beside the second pyramid stand the meagre remains of its temple, in which offerings were made in memory of Khafra. From this temple a paved causeway, of which the pavement blocks still remain, led down into the plain from the rocky plateau on which the pyramids stand. At its lower end it enters the building which goes by the name of the Temple of the Sphinx. In all probability this building was not a temple at all, but a kind of monumental portal, through which the priestly processions entered to proceed up the causeway to the

pyramid-temple on the king's feast-days. The remains of the structure still bear witness to the magnificence with which the great kings of the Fourth Dynasty surrounded their tombs; its pillars are monoliths of red granite, and its walls are lined with alabaster. In a subterranean chamber of one of its halls, Mariette discovered several statues of Khafra, one of which, the famous diorite portrait of the king, to be referred to later, marks almost the highest achievement of Egyptian art in the portraiture of its monarcns.

Near to the second pyramid there stands the Great Sphinx, the most famous of all Egyptian sculptures. This huge figure, human-headed and lion-bodied, is hewn out of the living rock of the plateau, though it has been frequently repaired by building. The body is about 150 feet long, the paws are 50 feet, the height from the base to the top of the head is 70 feet, while the head itself is 30 feet in length, and the face 14 feet wide. In all likelihood the face is a royal portrait, but of what king remains unknown. For the date of its execution, a lower limit is fixed by the stele of Tahutmes IV., placed between the monster's paws, and bearing record that in the days of this king's father the great statue was already buried in the sand. The earlier limit is not so easily fixed. All that can be said is that it is not improbable that the Sphinx may belong to the reign of Khafra.

So far as is indicated by these works, the only important relics remaining of Khafra's reign, it would appear that the standard set by Khufu was pretty well maintained by his successor, though a slight falling-off in power and skill is suggested. But the declension is more marked when we come to the work of Khafra's successor, Menkaura. His pyramid is less than half the height of the others, with a corresponding inferiority in every dimension. Its workmanship, moreover, is very inferior to theirs, and

though an attempt was made to give it distinction by building the sixteen lowest courses of its casing of red granite, it would appear that the pyramid was never really finished. The sarcophagus of Menkaura was found within his pyramid by Vyse, and was shipped for England, but was unfortunately lost at sea. The lid of a wooden coffin bearing the king's name was also found, and is now in the British Museum; but it is not certain whether this coffin is really of Menkaura's time, or is a late reconstruction of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty.

The decline of power manifest in Menkaura's works appears to have gone on unchecked during the rest of the period. The two or three remaining kings of the dynasty whose names have come down to us are little more than names, and we can readily supply in imagination the picture of the weak successors of a race of mighty kings steadily dwindling in ability and power, until a new force arose to push the weaklings aside and begin another cycle of development. The transition from the Fourth Dynasty to the Fifth is the subject of one of the most famous of Egyptian tales, found in the document known as the Westcar Papyrus. In this curious fairy-tale we are introduced to the court of Khufu when the great king is discussing the subject of magic with his courtiers. Prince Hordadef maintains that there is in Egypt a magician as powerful as any of ancient days. In obedience to his father's command, Hordadef brings the reluctant wizard, Dedi by name, to court, and after he has at the king's request given various evidences of his power, such as the restoration to life of a bullock and a goose which had been beheaded, the wizard tells the king that certain sacred writings which his majesty was in search of should be delivered to him by the eldest of three children shortly to be borne by the wife of a priest of the Sun-god Ra. When the king seeks to know more about these children,

Dedi at last reluctantly tells him that they will come, one after the other, to exercise 'that excellent dignity over this whole country,' or, in other words, to fill the throne. Seeing the king downcast at this prediction of the supersession of his family, the magician consoles him with the information that it will not be immediate. 'Thy son,' he says, 'his son, and then one of these.' The story then goes on to relate, with much marvellous detail, how these three children, who are really children of the sun-god, are born, and how the goddesses who preside over birth give to them the names of Userkaf, Sahura, and Kakau, which are the names of the first three kings of the Fifth Dynasty, and proclaim that each shall be king over the whole land. They then make crowns, and leave them in the house of the fortunate priest, and from the chamber where the crowns are laid there come sounds of supernatural music. The tale unfortunately breaks off just at the point where the servant-maid of the house, having been punished by her mistress, says: 'Ought she to do that to me, she who has borne three kings? I shall go and tell it to King Khufu.' We are left to conjecture what steps, if any, Khufu took against the three infant pretenders to his throne; but no doubt in its original form the narrative related how the prediction of the ancient sage accomplished itself, and the descendants of Ra grasped the sceptre which the weak hands of Khufu's successors were unable longer to hold.

Under its magical mask, this tale doubtless contains what the Egyptians of a later period knew of a real revolution, in which a new line of kings, descended from the Heliopolitan priesthood of the sun-god Ra, set aside the ancient stock and usurped the throne. Henceforward every Pharaoh maintains the fiction which attributed the generation of the founders of the Fifth Dynasty to Ra, and looks upon himself as the genuine offspring of the

sun-god. We are ignorant of the form which the revolution took; but the fact of the establishment of a priestly line of kings with strong leanings to the Heliopolitan cult of Ra is evidenced, not only by the addition of the new title 'Son of Ra' to the Pharaonic titulary, but also by the remains of the magnificent temples erected at Abusir by the kings of the Fifth Dynasty in honour of the sun-god.

Apart from the development of sun-worship, the rule of the kings of this dynasty, lasting for upwards of two centuries, presents few features of importance. Their priestly character is strongly marked all along, and they appear to have done little more than retain a hold upon the territories which the stronger hands of earlier rulers had grasped. Userkaf, the founder of the dynasty, has left his name on the rocks at the first cataract, which may mean much or nothing. Sahura, his successor, has an inscription in the Sinai Peninsula, and is also notable as having been the first king of Egypt of whom it is recorded that he opened direct communication with that part of Somaliland which the Egyptians called 'Punt' and 'God's Land,' and from which they derived precious gums and resins for incense, together with gold and costly woods. Assa, however, the eighth king of the line, deserves more than a passing notice. Not only was his tablet carved in the Wady Maghareh at Sinai (now unfortunately destroyed by careless modern turquoise-miners), but he was the first to open the long line of royal inscriptions in the quarries of the Wady Hammamat, and his expedition to the land of Punt, conducted by the treasurer Ba-ur-dedu, survives in memory from the fact of a dwarf of the Dengas having been brought back as a dancer for the king's amusement—a fact referred to in an inscription of the reign of Pepy II. of the Sixth Dynasty. The oldest dated papyrus, now unfortunately in fragments, contains accounts of the

reign of Assa; while this reign also gives us the earliest piece of literature known in Egypt—'The Proverbs of Ptah-hetep.' The earliest extant copy of this ancient book of wisdom is only of the Twelfth Dynasty, but there seems no reason to doubt that it genuinely represents a much older original, and that the proverbs were really the composition of this ancient sage of the Fifth Dynasty.

Assa was succeeded by Unas, the last king of the dynasty, whose pyramid-tomb near the step pyramid of Saqqara contains the earliest collection of religious texts extant. The pyramid is in itself of little interest and inferior workmanship. When opened, its mummy chamber was found to contain a sarcophagus of black basalt which had already been plundered by tomb-robbers, who had left nothing but a few scattered fragments of the king's mummy. The walls of the corridors and chambers of the pyramid are covered with vertical lines of hieroglyphics inlaid with green paste, giving the earliest version of the 'Pyramid Texts,' and inestimably important as conveying to us the religious views of the Egyptians on the subject of the after-life, not only from the early period to which Unas himself belongs, but from much earlier dates. A very remarkable passage describing how the dead King Unas hunts and devours the gods in the underworld is evidently a survival of a very ancient and primitive conception. 'Unas devoureth men and liveth upon the gods . . . the great ones among them serve for his meal at daybreak, the lesser serve for his meal at eventide, and the least among them serve for his meal in the night. The old gods and the old goddesses become fuel for his furnace.'

On the whole, the general impression produced by the records of the Fifth Dynasty is one of a gradual decline. The art of the period is inferior to that of the Fourth

Dynasty, though the tomb of Thy is notable for its fine work. The pyramids of the kings show very poor workmanship, and their small size suggests that the sovereign had no longer that absolute control over his subjects which would enable him to bend the whole resources of his kingdom to the erection of a magnificent sepulchre for himself. There are indications of that gradual rise in importance of the nobles and the official class which we shall see reaching its culmination and ending in a period of anarchy at the close of the Sixth Dynasty. On the other hand, the period leaves us relics in literature and religion which have an interest not inferior to that of any other period of Egyptian history; and perhaps the absence of immense monumental structures may have meant greater happiness and prosperity for the rank and file of the nation.

The Sixth Dynasty probably rose to power in consequence of the overthrow of the Fifth by the great barons of the kingdom after the death of Unas; and during its course we can trace, by means of the tomb inscriptions of the great lords and officials, the gradual increase in power of the local magnates, nomarchs, and governors, which culminated, after the long reign of Pepy II., in the confusion which marks the period between the Seventh and Tenth Dynasties. The Pharaoh is now no longer such an absolute monarch as in the days of Khufu. His great lords still hold from him; their estates and governorships have to be confirmed to them by the king; they are often very zealous in his service; but, at the same time, the estates are no longer held by special gift of the throne, but pass from father to son; the officials no longer ascribe all the glory of their achievements to their royal master, but complacently assume it to themselves, and, perhaps as significant as anything, they are no longer buried in rows around his pyramid, but have their

rock-hewn tombs, each man in his own nome, or near to his own city.

Teta, the first king of the Sixth Dynasty, has left a pyramid, much dilapidated, and long ago robbed, but containing versions of the Pyramid Texts which are of the utmost value. The third king of the dynasty, Pepy I., appears to have been a strong and capable ruler, and traces of his work are found in many places. His pyramid-city was situated close to 'White Wall.' Its name was Men-nefer and this name speedily superseded that of White Wall as the designation of the neighbouring city. Men-nefer the capital continued to be called—a name which was corrupted into Memphis by the Greeks. The chief events of the reign of Pepy I. are narrated for us by one of his great officials, a man named Una, who on the walls of his tomb at Abydos describes his public services. He tells us how he was gradually promoted through lower official grades, until so important a matter as the trial of Pepy's queen, Amtes (for what offence is not specified), was entrusted to him alone. His judicial efforts had already been rewarded by a royal gift of the costly stones required for the furnishing of his tomb—the most highly esteemed mark of royal favour in an Egyptian's eyes. Thereafter, trouble having broken out in connection with the Bedawy tribes, Pepy commanded Una to raise a force for their chastisement. Una called out the militia of the nomes, and added to it a strong force enlisted from the negro tribes to the south of the first cataract; and his motley host triumphantly accomplished the purpose for which it had been embodied. This expedition was followed by several others, in one of which Una embarked his men on troop-ships, and carried them on a raid into Southern Palestine, a feat which marks the furthest northern advance of the Old Kingdom Pharaohs. On Pepy's death, his son, Mer-en-ra, a mere

youth, succeeded him, and immediately appointed the faithful Una governor of the South, and dispatched him to procure the black granite block for the sarcophagus, and fine stone for the other fittings and adornments of the royal pyramid. So perfect was the state of subjection in which the southern district was held by this trusty servant that Una was able to accomplish his errand with only one warship as escort, though later he found some difficulty in bringing the heavy and unwieldy stone barges down the river to their destination. On the completion of this task Una was commissioned to cut canals through the barriers at the first cataract, in order to secure a passage for ships of war or trade on any future expedition.

Una's narrative is now taken up by that of Her-khuf, one of the barons of Elephantine. On his tomb at Aswan he records how King Mer-en-ra sent him on three several expeditions to the country inhabited by the tribes known as the Mazoi, the Aarthet, and the Wawat—a territory lying in the great bend of the Nile in Nubia. On his first expedition Her-khuf accompanied his father, and was absent for seven months. On the second he was sufficiently experienced to go alone, and was absent for eight months, returning with a large and valuable convoy. On his third expedition he found the chief of the Aam warring against the Temehu, a tribe 'at the west point of heaven.' The Egyptian leader lent a hand to the chief of the Aam in his war, and was in turn helped by a large guard being sent with him to protect his caravan. The other tribes, seeing the strength of the expedition, respected it, and Her-khuf returned with complete success, and was met by a messenger whom the gratified king sent up the Nile with delicacies for the refreshment of his faithful and weary servant. These exploring journeys were interrupted by the untimely death of Mer-en-ra in the fifth year of his reign. The king's mummy was found in his

pyramid, and in a good state of preservation. It appears that he died young, the youthful side-lock of hair being still upon his head. The state of the mummy reveals the skill which the Memphite embalmers had reached in their craft at this very early date.*

Mer-en-ra was succeeded by his younger brother, Pepy Nefer-ka-ra, or Pepy II., whose reign is the longest recorded in history, for, coming to the throne at the age of six, he lived, it is stated, to the age of a hundred. Her-khuf's inscription gives us a quaint little picture of the young Pharaoh at the age of eight, and his childish eagerness for a new toy. The Lord of Elephantine has engraven upon his tomb wall a letter received from his boy master, who had learnt of his bold vassal's return from another expedition. 'Thou hast said,' the king writes, 'in this thy letter that thou hast brought a *Denk* of the dances of the God from the Land of the Blessed Spirits, like to the *Denk* which the divine chancellor Baurded brought from Punt in the time of Assa. . . . Each year thou doest the pleasure and desire of thy lord; thy sleeping and thy waking hours are devoted to the performance of that which thy lord desires, praises and commands. His Majesty will do thee many excellent honours to the glory of thy son's son for ever.' He then issues orders that Her-khuf is to bring down the dwarf at once by boat to Memphis. Pepy is evidently much more anxious to see the pigmy than to meet his faithful servant, and his instructions are minute. 'If he embarks with thee on a ship, let good people be behind him on the two sides of the ship to guard him from falling into the water; and when he is lying down at night, let good people lie behind him in his tent, and inspect them ten times in the night. My Majesty desires to see this *Denk* more than the products of the mines and of Punt; and if thou comest to the palace and this *Denk* is with thee alive and

* *See note on p. 42.*

well, My Majesty will do for thee more than was done for the divine chancellor Baurded in the time of Assa, according to the disposition of the heart of My Majesty to see this *Denk*.' The existence of the letter, which quaintly shows that boy-nature is much the same everywhere and at all times, suggests that Her-khuf succeeded in bringing his prize safely to the court of the young king.

Other inscriptions of the lords of Elephantine, such as those of Sebni and Pepinakht, show that exploration and adventure were rife in these early days of the world's history. The explorers did not always return unscathed; more than one of the nobles perished in their tasks, and more expeditions than one were completely cut off by the warlike tribes of the desert.

It would appear that the latter years of Pepy's lengthy reign saw the beginning of the troublous times which were to continue for several generations. Probably the king's extreme age rendered him too feeble to control properly the bold barons who had served him so well when firmly kept in hand. At all events, after the close of his reign we have no further relics of the dynasty except the names of one or two shadowy Pharaohs of whom nothing is known, among whom we may possibly place the queen Nitokris, concerning whom so many extravagant legends were current among the Greeks. Practically the death of Pepy II. marks the end of the dynasty and of the period. The turbulent barons asserted their strength against the declining power of the royal house; the kingdom split up into a number of petty principalities, each ruled over by its own princelet; there was no strong central authority, but 'every man did what was right in his own eyes'; and the land was made miserable by a state of anarchy, tempered locally by the rise of some stronger despot, who was able to impose his will upon a few of the petty chiefs around him.

Thus ended the Old Kingdom, the earliest, and in many respects the most fruitful, stage of Egyptian development. From the time of Mena to that of Pepy II. may have been some 1,500 years, and in that time the nation had grown into a strength and civilization at whose remains we can only wonder. It had achieved results in architecture and sculpture which were never surpassed and seldom approached in the later history of the people; while the servants of the Pharaohs had shown the way for that career of conquest which marked the rise of the Empire, and had written the first page of that long story of African exploration of which our own period is writing the latter chapters. The picture which we have of these far-off days, imperfect as it is, presents to us a race of high powers and of fresh and unexhausted strength, preparing itself for the long task which yet lay before it in the world, and giving abundant promise of a capacity equal to its great destiny.

*Note to p.* 40.—The earliest extant genuine mummy is of the Second Dynasty. Professor Elliot Smith (*Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. i., p. 193) states that only in one case, that of a royal prince of the Eighteenth Dynasty, probably a son of Amenhotep II., has the side-lock been found.

## CHAPTER III

### SOCIETY, ART, AND LITERATURE IN THE OLD KINGDOM

We have now to attempt to reconstruct for ourselves the state of society in that ancient kingdom the outlines of whose history we have been tracing. The picture, of course, cannot pretend to minute accuracy, and can only offer a general truth in its main outlines; for it must be remembered that we are dealing with a lengthened period of history, in the course of which there must have occurred many important changes of detail which are now quite imperceptible to us.

Supreme head of the whole complex of the national life stands forth the king—a greater figure, perhaps, in the earlier days of the Fourth Dynasty than he came to be later, but always immeasurably removed, in theory at least, from the greatest of his subjects. The reverence due to him was expressed in his title, 'The Good God,' in the prostrations which were required of everyone who entered his presence, and very significantly by the impersonal manner in which it was considered proper to refer to him. The title 'Per-O'—'Great House'—which first of all belonged to the palace, gradually came to be applied to the reigning monarch in a manner somewhat similar to that in which 'the Sublime Porte' has come to be applied to the Government of Turkey, and, in the form

of 'Pharaoh,' has become for us the regular title of the Egyptian monarchs.

This lofty and dignified being was surrounded by a glittering and elaborate court. Already, as early as the reigns of Narmer and Mena, we have seen the emergence of the Court Chamberlain, while a little later came the Master of the Ceremonies. By the end of the Old Kingdom there had been evolved the usual host of gorgeous courtier figures, from the Prime Minister or Vizier, the first man in the land after the Pharaoh, down to the 'Keeper of the King's Cosmetic-box'; and the ceremonial of the Egyptian court appears to have been as complicated and as much encumbered with endless rules of precedence and formality as that of the *Grand Monarque*.

According to invariable Eastern custom, the king was provided with a numerous harem. The chief wife, however, was the only one viewed as the official queen, and, owing to the importance attached by the Egyptians to the female line of descent, she occupied a position almost as influential as that of her lord. The princes of the royal house were not permitted to lead idle lives. In the earlier days of the kingdom the Crown Prince was frequently also the Prime Minister, though this custom appears to have become extinct with the rise of the Fifth Dynasty. The children of the great nobles were sometimes admitted to intimacy with the young scions of the royal house, and shared in their education and their sports. The king himself, though so far removed in theory from his people, was by no means a mere *roi fainéant*, but exercised a constant and active supervision over the affairs of his kingdom. His chief assistant was the Vizier, who was also Chief Justice of the land, and very often architect and superintendent of construction to boot. Under this chief administrator there was an army of officials of all sorts, attached to the Treasury, to the

office of the Registration of Land, to that of the Inundation, and to various other departments. In theory, at least, all these departments were twofold, preserving in name the remembrance of the time when Egypt was divided into two kingdoms; but probably this became a mere fiction at a very early stage of the history. There was a highly elaborated system of law, of which, unfortunately, no part has been preserved; but there was no official class of judges, the law being administered in the various districts by the local governors, many of whom boast of their integrity in the discharge of this important function. In cases of special moment a judicial commission was sometimes appointed, with powers to hear and to determine, as in the case of Queen Amtes, where Una, as already mentioned, was made judge.

For administrative purposes the land was divided into local districts, or 'nomes,' of which there were about forty. These were administered by local governors, or 'nomarchs,' who were responsible to the central treasury and to the king. This system of devolution, while simplifying the administration of the country, led in the end to the destruction of the Old Kingdom; for these small States became each a kind of *imperium in imperio*, the local governors became more and more important, and at last, by the combination of their growing influence, the central authority was overthrown.

This consummation was aided by the military system of the nation. There was no standing army, but each nome maintained its own body of local militia. These troops were liable to be called out by the Pharaoh when occasion arose, and were then sometimes stiffened, as in the case of Una's expeditionary force, by regiments and brigades enlisted from among the tribes on the borders of the land. In addition to the forces thus more or less at the disposal of the Pharaoh, the various temples, like the

abbeys of the Middle Ages, had each its own body of militia. This loose form of military organization, however convenient in many respects, was obviously a source of weakness and danger to the central authority. The local troops, raised and led by local governors, might easily become more attached to the interests of their particular nome or governor than to the larger but vaguer interests of the kingdom or the Pharaoh, and in the hands of an able and ambitious monarch might be used as readily against the power of the central authority as in support of it — a state of things which was actually realized repeatedly in the course of the nation's history.

At this stage of the national development no fixed capital existed. The locality of the court and capital was determined, for the time being, by the place which the reigning Pharaoh selected for his pyramid. Around this spot a new court grew up, which lasted as long as the reign; and when the king had passed away the court was again shifted to the new locality which had been chosen by his successor. In the days in question, however, the locality of the court was generally somewhere in the vicinity of the great city of Memphis. This mobility of so complex an organization as the royal court of Egypt was rendered possible by the character of Egyptian domestic architecture. Egypt has left us many temples and tombs, but practically no complete specimen of its palaces or of the houses of its noble class. Its cities have all perished, for the reason that the houses were of the very lightest construction. No doubt the royal palaces, and even the mansions of the nobles, were of great size; but, as the climate dictated, they were of the most fragile materials, consisting mainly of wood and sun-dried brick. They were profusely, and in some instances very beautifully, adorned with designs in colour, and were richly furnished; but such methods of construc-

tion were, of course, totally unable to withstand the assaults of time, and in consequence we know of the structure and adornment of the Old Kingdom palaces and mansions only from pictured representations of them. The houses of the wealthier Egyptians were generally surrounded with gardens, carefully and tastefully laid out, and diversified with trees and shrubs, the chief feature of the design being frequently a piece of ornamental water. Very different from these beautiful, if fragile, villas were the houses of the common people, of which traces have come down to us. In the city life of Egypt under the Old Kingdom the working classes seem to have been huddled together in mud hovels packed closely side by side, with only narrow streets, or rather alleys, between the blocks; and overcrowding would seem to have been as characteristic of the cities in those far-off days as it is at the present time.

Of the moral standard prevalent not very much is known. The fact of the king keeping a harem is merely in accordance with the immemorial custom of Eastern sovereigns, and does not necessarily imply a low level of moral ideas. In fact, the position of women all through the historic period was much higher in the land of the Nile than in any other Eastern country. As already mentioned, the most direct line of inheritance was on the female side; and if we may judge from the few specimens of literature which have survived from these ancient days, the wife and the mother were looked upon with considerable respect, and occupied a position of much influence in the household. Monogamy was the rule, and the women of the community appear to have been well treated, and to have had a much greater amount of freedom than is common among Eastern peoples. At the same time, where people were crowded together in such promiscuous fashion as in the great towns of ancient Egypt, the

standard of morality among the lower classes cannot have been very high, and the urgent warnings against immoral conduct which have been preserved in the literature of the period indicate that while the ideal of conduct was lofty, the practice was not always in accordance with it.

Of the ordinary life of the people we have fairly good evidences. The Old Kingdom nobles were by no means in that stage of idleness which has so often proved the ruin of a leisured and privileged class. On the contrary, they appear to have been active and energetic, taking a prominent part in the government of their respective districts, holding themselves responsible for the welfare of the people under them, and exerting themselves in very praiseworthy fashion to secure it. They exercised a constant personal supervision over their own estates, and in addition were liable, as we have seen, to be dispatched on long and arduous expeditions in the service of their sovereign. So far as the evidence goes, a leading characteristic of the ancient Egyptian nobility was a passionate love of Nature. The houses of the nobles were adorned with lifelike and artistic representations of natural objects, rendered frequently with the utmost fidelity, and their chief diversion seems to have been found in outdoor sports. The great noble goes fishing or fowling among the reeds and papyrus thickets of the marshes in his light papyrus skiff, often with his wife as companion. Sometimes he amuses himself by harpooning the fish which abound in the shallow waters; at other times he pursues water-fowl, which he brings down by means of a throw-stick (Figs. 35 and 36) resembling the Australian boomerang, though there is no evidence that the Egyptian had learned so to make and control this weapon as to render it capable of the wonderful feats which the Australian black-fellow can perform with it. Occasion-

ally bigger game occupied his attention, and a great hunt was organized for the capture of the hippopotamus or the crocodile, abundant in those days in the Nile waters, from which they have now been practically driven (Fig. 4). Sometimes the hunt was carried into the desert after the lion and the antelope, in the pursuit of which dogs of

FIG. 4.—HUNTING THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

various breeds were used; but the desert remained to the Egyptian a somewhat fearful place, and his imagination peopled it with strange mysterious creatures of fantastic shapes (Fig. 5).

On the whole the life of the Egyptian upper classes seems not to have differed much, save in detail, from

what has been the normal life of the upper classes of all other nations during the period of their healthy youth, and to have had enough of the saving graces of duty and exertion about it to save it from stagnation and corruption.

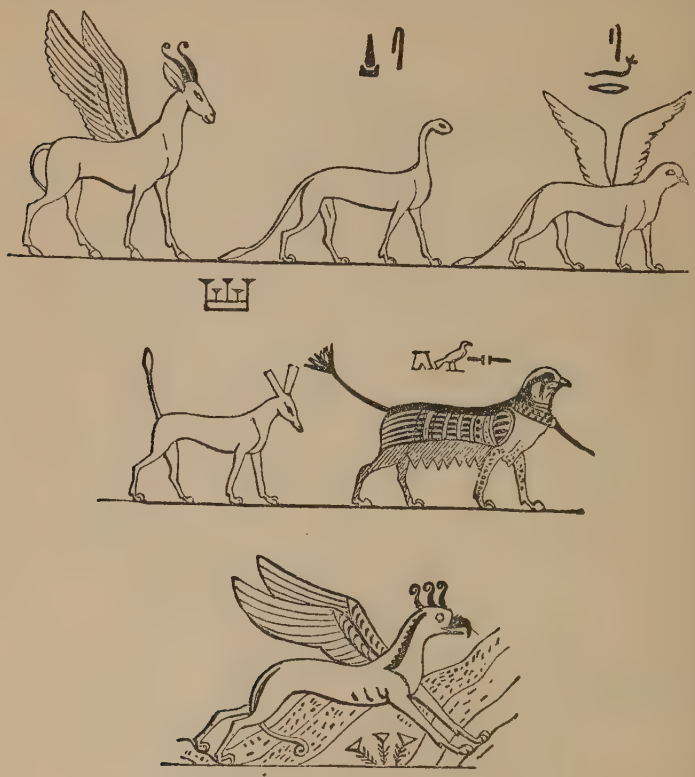


FIG. 5.—MONSTERS OF THE DESERT.

The progress of the movement away from the court though reaching in the end an exaggeration which resulted in anarchy, must, in its earlier stages, have told in the main for good. The residence of the great lord in a district of which he was the providence must have

inclined him to take a pride in its welfare, and in all likelihood the peasantry suffered less when their overlord was personally in their midst than when he was a mere gilded hanger-on of the Pharaoh's court.

As to the lot of the common people, though it can scarcely be said to have been brilliant, it was probably no worse than that of the corresponding class in any other country under despotic rule. The forced labour which must have been entailed by the vast constructions especially of the Fourth Dynasty, must have been burdensome; but it is questionable, as Petrie has shown, if even the erection of the Great Pyramid, accepting the figures of Herodotus as to the number of men employed, was so great a tax upon the community as might be supposed. Apart from such exceptional structures, there must always have been a demand for labour on the public works, the canals and embankments necessary for utilizing the waters of the inundation being themselves sufficient to require a large and constantly employed staff, while the quarry records show that public building practically never ceased. The main work of the populace was, however, agricultural. There does not seem to have been any class of yeomen, or petty proprietors; the condition of the fellah was more or less that of a serf, cultivating the fields for his master, and repaid by his subsistence, or by a small percentage of the annual yield. Life under these conditions must have been somewhat monotonous; but the sarcastic pictures of the life of the working classes drawn by the scribes of later date may to some extent be discounted by the fact that they are the product of petty officialdom.

In addition to the forced labour, largely unskilled, demanded by the public works, and the field-work which employed the bulk of the populace, skilled labour of various kinds already engaged a considerable proportion of the nation. Foremost among the skilled labourers was the

stone-worker. Even at this period the Egyptian mason had reached a surprising standard of skill in dealing with large masses of stone. Blocks of granite of 50 tons' weight and upwards were commonly employed, and there is abundant evidence of the skill with which these, and even harder stones, were wrought. The diorite and basalt blocks used as coffins were hollowed by means of tubular drills in a fashion which would do credit to the most skilled workmen and the best appliances of the present day; in fact, the comparison of modern drill-cores with those turned out by the Old Kingdom drills is all in favour of the ancient workman. The blocks of hard stone were cut with saws whose length, in some instances, was 9 feet. The lathe was already in common use for stone-work, and bowls of the hardest stone were cut by its help in the cleanest fashion, and with such delicacy that in some instances the body of a diorite bowl is no thicker than a piece of stout card.

Trade was largely carried on by means of barter, and there are vigorous representations of the animated scenes in the markets. Already, however, rings of gold and copper of definite value were in use as a fixed currency. The art of weaving had reached a high level, and the 'fine linen of Egypt' was worthy of the great reputation which it maintained in later days. Wood was scarce and expensive, notwithstanding which it was largely in use, and the carpenters of the Old Kingdom produced fine and beautiful work in the way of furniture and house-fittings; while the shipwrights had, as we have seen, reached a skill in their craft which enabled them to produce ships of considerable size, and the Nile bore great numbers of merchant-vessels, in addition to the pleasure-boats and warships of the various local magnates. Gold was obtained in large quantities from the mountains bordering the Red Sea, or by trade from Nubia; silver had to be

imported, probably from Cilicia, and was consequently scarce, and reckoned more valuable than gold. Little of the goldsmith's work of the Old Kingdom has survived; but such examples as the bracelets found on the arm of the wife of King Zer (First Dynasty) show that the jeweller of the period had acquired some of the skill of which such remarkable evidences remain from the Twelfth and subsequent dynasties. Turquoise, malachite, and copper were obtained from the mines of the Sinai Peninsula, which had been wrought from the earliest historic times; and iron was certainly, though perhaps not very extensively, used. On the whole, judging from the representations extant, all the great trades, from that of the farmer to that of the jeweller, had reached a state of development which would have been creditable at any period, and is little less than marvellous when the dates with which we are dealing are remembered.

The art of the period was not less remarkable than its craftsmanship. In architecture, the work remaining to us from the earlier dynasties up to and including the Fourth is imposing rather than beautiful; but the remains of the sun-temples of the Fifth Dynasty show how far the Egyptian architects had already developed that form of art which produced such remarkable results in later periods. In their temple-building the arch, although known, was not employed; but a strong and simple style had been evolved, whose main features were the vertical column and the horizontal roofing-beam. The column must have been in use for a considerable time, for under the Fifth Dynasty it is employed in varied and highly decorative forms. The two forms most generally used are skilfully conventionalized renderings of the palm-stem with its crown of foliage, and of the clustered stalks of the papyrus. In the former the stem expands into a group of leaves which form a graceful capital; in the latter the

grouped stalks are bound together, just beneath the heads, with a fillet, and the heads cluster together into the capital on which the architrave rests. The Old Kingdom thus presents us with the earliest forms of that noble style of columned architecture which reaches its culmination in the great works of the Greek period. The temples of the Fifth Dynasty, with their graceful colonnades and brilliant colour-schemes, are extremely significant of the taste and skill which, at such an early period, had been able to conceive and to execute works so satisfactory to the senses of proportion and of colour.

It was in statuary work, however, that the Egyptian art of this period reached its height. In considering the works which have survived to us, regard must always be had to the conditions under which, and the purposes for which, they were created. It has to be remembered that an Egyptian statue was never, save partially in the case of statues of the gods, an ideal work; nor was it ever meant to be placed in the open for public inspection and admiration, the one exception to this rule being found in the colossal statues of the later Pharaohs. The Egyptian sculptor worked for a purely practical end. His object was to provide a resting-place to which the vital force or 'ka' of his patron might attach itself after death in the event of his mummy being destroyed by the lapse of time. Accordingly the statues were meant to be built up in a small chamber beside the chapel of the 'mastaba' or tomb, and the first and last requirement was that they should be, as nearly as possible, exact and lifelike representations of the originals, in order that the wandering 'ka' might have no difficulty in recognizing its habitation. We have, therefore, no statues of ideal beauty. Faithfulness was the one thing sought after — faithfulness, if necessary, to ugliness, or even to bodily deformity, not less than to personal perfections. In the pursuit of this

aim the Egyptian sculptor achieved a success which could scarcely be surpassed. His skill was concentrated upon the face, as being the most characteristic part of his subject; and in general the body and limbs are more or less summarized and conventionally treated. But the face is handled with astonishing vivacity. Mm. Perrot and Chipiez do not exaggerate when they remark of the portrait-statues of the Old Kingdom that they are 'effigies to which a contemporary would have put a name without the slightest hesitation.' These remarkable specimens of portraiture were, for the most part, carved in limestone or in wood. Of the limestone statues, the most notable are those of Rahotep and his wife, Nefert, found at Medum, and now in the Cairo Museum; of Ranofer, also at Cairo; of Hemset, in the Louvre; and that wonderful piece of realism known as the Sitting Scribe of the Louvre. In order to increase their life-likeness, these statues were coloured, and the eyes were inserted, a metal pupil being set in an iris of rock-crystal, which is surrounded by an eyeball of opaque white quartz. The resulting expression is remarkably vivacious. Of the wooden statues, the best known is that called the Shekh-el-Beled, or Mayor of the village, from the fact that when it was discovered the Arab workmen immediately recognized its likeness to the local magnate of that rank. As a work of art it can scarcely be said to be pleasing; as a portrait one can easily believe it to be unsurpassable. After so many thousand years the stout old dignitary, self-important, but not altogether unkindly, seems still tc live before the eye.

In addition to work of this class, the sculptor wrought, though more sparingly, in the hardest and most intractable, but for that very reason the most durable, of stones, such as diorite and basalt. These stones were seemingly mainly reserved for such works as the portrait-statues of the

kings. Nowhere is the skill and confidence of the Egyptian artist's work more wonderfully exhibited than in his treatment of such materials. In the great diorite statue of Khafra, perhaps the finest example of this period, the unknown sculptor has produced a work which must rank as one of the world's masterpieces. Recognizing the limitations imposed by his material, his treatment is broad and summary, the salient points of expression being slightly emphasized. The statue is obviously successful as a portrait, while it combines with the likeness of an individual the characteristic dignity and impassiveness of the royal type.

The discoveries of late years have proved that the skill of the Old Kingdom artist was not confined to work in stone or wood. The copper statues of King Pepy I. and his son Prince Mer-en-ra reveal an astonishing facility in the art of portraiture in metal. The copper has been beaten in plates over a wooden core, and though the statues are in a very dilapidated condition, the impression of lifelikeness is very strong. The eyes have here also been inserted, a pupil of obsidian being set in an eyeball of white limestone.

A very striking feature of the artistic work of the Old Kingdom is the relief work which appears in such profusion upon the walls of the tomb-chapels at Saqqara and Medum. It is from these remarkable reliefs that we have learned practically all that is known of the ordinary life of the period. Before the figure of the deceased person to whom the tomb belongs there defiles along the walls an endless procession of workmen—farm-servants, hunters, fishers, jugglers—all engaged in their usual occupations; while figures of cattle, birds, and fish help to make up scenes of sport and amusement, which are depicted with the most surprising realism and fidelity. In judging of the merits of these otherwise most important works,

regard must be had to the fact that the Egyptian artist, when depicting the human form on a flat or slightly modelled surface, was bound by an unvarying convention with regard, at least, to the important figures of his scene —a convention which was only slightly relaxed in later times. It was considered proper that the body should be expressed as though seen from different points of view in its different parts. Thus the head, the legs, and the feet, are invariably in profile, while the eyes and shoulders are in full-face view; the lower part of the trunk is in three-

FIG. 6.—FISHING WITH NET: OLD KINGDOM RELIEF.

quarters view; and both the feet are always represented with the same side—that on which is the great toe—turned towards the spectator. If an arm or leg be advanced in the composition, it is almost always the one furthest from the spectator's eye.

Allowing for this curious convention, which sounds much more ridiculous in description than its results appear in actual practice, these modelled pictures of ancient Egyptian life will be found to be of remarkable interest, not only as documents, but as specimens of artistic skill. The salient characteristics, alike of human beings and of animals, are seized and represented with a combination of direct strength and delicacy which marks

out the relief work of this period as superior to any later Egyptian work of the kind. Plate V. gives an illustration of part of a scene from the tomb of Ptah-hetep, which may be compared with the similar scene from work of the Nineteenth Dynasty. The superiority of the more ancient artist is manifest. In addition to these reliefs, which were coloured, the artist of the time wrought also upon the flat, and his work in this style was not less vigorous than that in relief. Altogether the impression produced by the art of the Old Kingdom is one of strength and faithfulness,

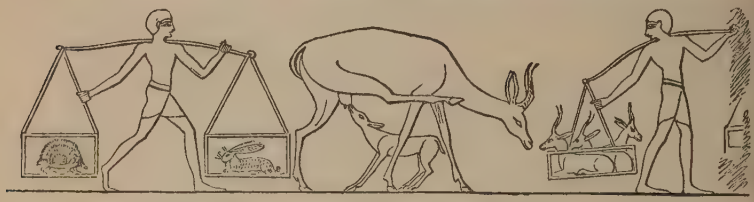


FIG. 7.—GAZELLES: OLD KINGDOM RELIEF.

FIG. 8.—BOATMEN FIGHTING.

combined with a remarkable technical skill and delicacy of execution—a combination never again found to such an extent in Egyptian work. The fine work of the earlier days of the Nineteenth Dynasty shows all, or perhaps more than all, of the delicacy of the Old Kingdom mastaba reliefs; but it has lost the strength and vigour, and has become languid, over-refined, and mannered; while the remarkable work of the Saite Renaissance is avowedly an imitation of these most ancient originals.

The scanty remains of the Old Kingdom literature do not enable us to gather much information about the state

1. RELIEF FROM TOMB OF PTAH-HETEP, FIFTH DYNASTY.

2. RELIEF FROM LUQSOR, NINETEENTH DYNASTY.

of learning or of the literary art. There is enough, however, to show how absolutely contrary to fact is the widely prevalent idea, due originally to Greek globe-trotters, that the Egyptian was a devotee of pure learning, and had penetrated deeply into all sorts of occult studies. All the evidence goes to show that he was one of the most severely practical of men, who sought learning, not for any joy in the attainment of truth for its own sake, but simply as a means to an end. Early in the period which we are considering there had already arisen a numerous official class, for whom a certain amount of learning was the absolutely essential passport to advancement. This scribe class had long since reduced the elaborate hieroglyphic writing of the monuments to a more easily written cursive form, known as hieratic. In this form the great mass of writing from this period has come down to us, and the bulk of it is in the shape of scribe's exercise-books, in which the budding official set down his early attempts at writing and keeping accounts. These copy-books, often with the master's corrections still upon them, have proved of a value which even the vain and self-complacent scribe can scarcely have anticipated.

Such school exercises, however valuable to the student of manners and customs, can hardly be dignified with the name of literature. The only remains which have a claim to such rank are one or two simple folk-songs; the religious inscriptions known as the Pyramid Texts, which often display a certain rude vigour of imagination and expression; and the two famous Wisdom books known as the Proverbs of Ptah-hetep and Kagemni. These last are only known to us in copies of a much later date—not earlier, indeed, than the Twelfth Dynasty; but there seems no ground to doubt that these represent the originals with fair accuracy, and that we have in them the substance of the earliest true books in the world. The

wisdom of these ancient sages is in general of a canny, practical character, concerning itself with the ordinary details of life and conduct, and inculcating a prudence which, however praiseworthy, reaches after no high ideals, and is based mainly on self-interest. We have, for example, from Ptah-hetep the following illustration of the gentle art of toadyism: 'If thou art among a company of men and women in the abode of a man who is greater than thyself, take whatsoever he giveth thee, making obeisance gratefully. Speak not oftener than he requireth, for one knoweth not what may displease him; speak when he speaketh to thee, and thy words shall be pleasing unto him.' An extract on the duty of a husband towards his wife shows a prudent, but scarcely an exalted, view of marital relationships: 'If thou wouldst be wise, rule thy house, and love thy wife wholly and constantly. Fill her stomach and clothe her body, for these are her personal necessities; love her tenderly and fulfil all her desires as long as thou hast thy life, for she is an estate which conferreth great reward upon her lord. . . . If thou resistest her will it is ruin.' The following, however, is better: 'If thou hast become a great man having once been of no account, and if thou hast become rich having once been poor, and hast become the governor of the city, take heed that thou dost not act haughtily because thou hast attained unto this high position. . . . Set not in the background thy neighbour who is as thou wast, but make thyself as if he were thine equal.' Ptah-hetep, the author of these mild maxims of worldly wisdom, was a contemporary of King Assa, Fifth Dynasty, and a prominent man in his day. His titles were 'hereditary prince,' 'governor of the city,' and 'chief minister,' while he may possibly have been related to the royal family. The tomb of Ptah-hetep at Saqqara, well known for its fine reliefs, may be that of this man of 'wise saws and

"ancient" instances.' The wisdom of Kagemni, who was a judge and governor of the city in the next dynasty, is of much the same type as that of Ptah-hetep. A single example will suffice: 'The cautious man succeeds, the accurate man is praised, to the man of silence even the sleeping-chamber is opened. Wide scope hath he who is acquiescent in his speech; knives are set against him who forceth his way wrongfully.'

In science some progress had been made with astronomy: the heavens had been roughly mapped, and the more prominent fixed stars identified. The Great Pyramid is oriented with remarkable accuracy, and its levels are astonishingly true. But there is no evidence that the Egyptian of this, or indeed of any, period had any desire for the pursuit of this science in such a spirit as animated the Chaldæan astronomers. Medical knowledge was apparently purely empirical. Some of the prescriptions preserved are fairly common sense in their application of simple remedies, others are a mere farrago of rubbish. The modern patient who should be required to swallow a bolus composed of 'the dirt of flies found on the wall,' or of 'the moisture from pig's ears,' would probably form a somewhat moderate conception of 'the wisdom of the Egyptians,' so far as medical skill is concerned. What seems curious, considering that as a nation the Egyptians were so accustomed to the opening of dead bodies, is that their knowledge of anatomy was very small, and much of what was taught concerning the structure of the body was the product of mere imagination. There was already a special medical class, and the names of some of the 'physicians-in-ordinary' to the early Pharaohs have come down to us. All medical skill was considered to be more or less dependent for its efficiency upon magical powers; and no doubt the common people believed the 'Abracadabra' which was muttered

over the bolus of fly's excrement to be even more important than the dose itself, in which they were possibly not far wrong.

Such, in rough outline, was the state of life and society in the vigorous days when Egypt was shaping herself for her great destiny. The picture presented, so far as its features can be judged, is by no means an unfavourable one. No doubt there existed much tyranny, ignorance, and unhappiness, of which no record is preserved save in vague and uncertain tradition. But on the whole the earliest historic period of Egypt will compare favourably with that of any other great nation, and forms a fitting prelude to the glory of her meridian.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RISE OF THEBES, THE MIDDLE KINGDOM, AND THE TWELFTH DYNASTY

After the passing of the Sixth Dynasty, there ensued a period of confusion in which it becomes difficult to trace the course of the history. The gradual rise in power of the local magnates seems to have culminated in a long period of civil war, during which the central authority preserved only a semblance of power, if even that. Apparently every man did what was right in his own eyes, without much regard to the feeble monarchs who still nominally held the throne. In this internecine strife the wonderful civilization of the Old Kingdom seemed to be on the verge of total destruction. The savagery with which the struggle was carried on is evidenced by the ruthless manner in which the great works of the former dynasties were violated and destroyed. There seems to have been a systematic attempt to obliterate the relics of the ancient rulers of the land; and the very portrait-statues of the kings were smashed or buried, the great diorite statue of Khafra, for instance, referred to in the preceding chapter, having been found by Mariette heaped pell-mell along with a number of others in a well-shaft in the so-called Temple of the Sphinx.

Two shadowy lines of monarchs are recorded by Manetho as the Seventh and Eighth Dynasties, with

their seat at Memphis; but little is known of them save one or two names, and their authority can only have been nominal. Thereafter the seat of government was transferred from Memphis to Herakleopolis, some distance further south, and the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties are recorded as being Herakleopolitan. They are almost as shadowy, however, as their predecessors, and only two names of any importance emerge. The first is that of King Khety Mery-ab-ra, who appears to have exercised some kind of sovereignty over the whole kingdom; the second is that of Mery-ka-ra, who appears, not as ruling, but as being more or less a puppet in the hands of one of the powerful vassals of the throne. The real power in the land lay, seemingly, in the hands of two families of such vassals—namely, the house of Khety of Siut, and that of the Antefs and Mentuhoteps, whose native town was Hermonthis, but who established their seat of government finally at Thebes, which city, formerly an unimportant country town, now began to rise into prominence.

Khety I., the first notable member of the Siut family of princes, was the fourth of his line, and was intimately connected with the royal family reigning at Herakleopolis, having been brought up in the palace along with the princes of the blood. He devoted himself to the task of consolidating and strengthening his power in the district of Siut, gathering a large army, in order to defend his province against the incursions of a league of the more southern lords. He was succeeded by his son, Tefaba, who, when the southern barons invaded his territory defeated them, and drove them up the river. For some reason, which at present can be only vaguely surmised, the royal family at Herakleopolis lost even its feeble hold upon the throne, and King Mery-ka-ra was driven from his capital up the river. He put himself under the protection of Khety II. of Siut, the grandson of Khety I.,

and this prince, gathering a numerous army and a great fleet, defeated the enemies of the unfortunate sovereign, and brought Mery-ka-ra back in triumph to Herakleopolis. A king who required thus to be held upon the throne by the strong hand of a vassal was, however, obviously unfitted for the task of curbing the turbulent barons of Egypt; and the Herakleopolitan line speedily disappears from the scene, to be succeeded by the first of the Theban dynasties.

The founder of this dynasty, the Eleventh, was the

Fig. 9.—Spearman, Middle Kingdom.

hereditary prince Antef of Hermonthis. He had been the organizer of that revolt of the South which has been referred to as having been defeated by Tefaba of Siut; and, though his first attempt was thus unsuccessful, the pressure from the South was kept up by him and by his son, also Antef by name. The latter appears to have scored sufficient successes against the hapless Herakleopolitan house and its sturdy vassals of Siut to warrant him in assuming the title of king, which he did as

Antef I. The strife against the princes of Siut was maintained, and, in spite of one or two defeats, was finally brought to a successful close by Mentuhotep I., who succeeded in establishing himself as lord of the whole land of Egypt. Thus the period of anarchy which had done so much to destroy the fruits of the labours of the first six dynasties came to an end, and the sceptre was once more held by strong and capable hands.

The Eleventh Dynasty, which had thus established itself with Thebes as its capital, consisted of a succession of Antefs and Mentuhoteps, whose order of reigning is somewhat doubtful. Under their rule the land began to recover itself again, and the foreign enterprises which had characterized the earlier dynasties were gradually resumed. We read of an expedition to the Red Sea under the command of a noble named Henu, who started from Koptos with a force of 3,000 men, traversed the desert route to Koser, digging wells by the way for the supply of future expeditions, and re-established communication by sea with the land of Punt. Having got back his cargoes in safety from Punt, he returned, bringing with him blocks of fine stone from the Wady Hammamat for the royal statues. Another expedition for quarrying purposes was also made to the Wady Hammamat. Its leader, Amenemhat, who had under him no fewer than 10,000 men, has left at Hammamat a record of the wonderful success of his expedition, which not only accomplished its purpose safely under the direct guidance of the god Min, of Koptos, but returned home without the loss of either man or beast.

How the Eleventh Dynasty finally passed away is not known. It has been conjectured that the Amenemhat whose successful expedition we have just mentioned, a man who could raise 10,000 men for a mere quarrying expedition, was too powerful to remain a subject, and that

he is to be identified with the Amenemhat who stands as the founder of the Twelfth Dynasty; but this is uncertain. The remains of the kings of the Eleventh Dynasty are not of great importance. No doubt they were too much occupied with the reorganization of the kingdom to have any great opportunities for temple-building or the erection of personal memorials, though the temple of Mentuhotep Neb-hapet-ra, recently excavated at Deir-el-Bahri, contains some fine relief work, and is otherwise interesting on account of the burials of ladies of the royal harem; but at least they rescued Egypt from the miserable condition of anarchy in which she had lain for upwards of three centuries, and it was their work which made possible the remarkable achievements which fall to be chronicled in the story of the Twelfth Dynasty.

We now reach one of the great periods of Egyptian history, in which the framework of society, which had been shaken so severely by the previous generations of civil strife, and only partially restored by the Antefs and Mentuhoteps, was at length thoroughly consolidated, and in which the growing vigour of the nation began once more to find expression in the extension of its boundaries, especially in a southerly direction, beyond the first cataract. How the founder of the dynasty, Amenemhat I., came to the throne is not ascertained; but it is evident that he was a vigorous and prudent sovereign, who proved able to bridle the ambitions and jealousies of the local magnates, and to assert the complete supremacy of the double crown over the whole land. His policy was to render the great barons more directly dependent upon the throne than formerly, and accordingly, while their right to their paternal estates was not interfered with, the right of acting as governors over their districts was held in the Pharaoh's own hands, and bestowed at his will. The record in the tomb of the nomarch Khnem-hotep, of the

Oryx nome at Beni-Hasan, shows how these appointments were made in the same family in successive generations, yet not by mere right of hereditary succession, but by special grant of the king. The administration of the nome was also more directly controlled by the crown than hitherto; and thus, while the rank and prestige of the great barons remained outwardly undiminished, their power to do harm was largely broken. They were no longer practically independent in their own districts, but were officials of the king, directly responsible to him.

The most important event in Amenemhat's reign was the removal of the seat of government from Thebes to a point near Dahshur. Here the king built a palace named Thet-taui, and fortified it. It may be suspected that there were still hostile elements in the nation sufficiently formidable to render it advisable that the court and the monarch should be guarded against the risk of sudden attack. That these precautions were not superfluous, nor, indeed, always adequate, is evident from a passage in the famous document known as 'The Instructions of Amenemhat,' in which the aged king hands on to his son Senusert the accumulated wisdom of experience. In this passage he warns his son in tones of bitterness against doing too much for other people, and instances an incident of his own career as in point. 'Keep to thyself thine own heart,' he says, 'for friends exist not for a man in the day of troubles. I gave to the beggar, and I made the orphan to exist. I caused the man of no position to obtain his purpose even as the man of position. It was the eater of my food that made insurrection; he to whom I gave a helping hand produced terror therewith; they who put on my fine linen looked on me as shadows; they who were anointed with my frankincense defiled me while using it.'* He then goes on to describe how he had laid himself down

* 'Teaching of Amenemhat,' translation by F. Ll. Griffith.

to sleep in his palace, when suddenly his slumbers were broken by the clash of the weapons of conspirators who had come to take his life. 'Then I woke up to fight, feeling strong in my limbs, but I soon found that it was to strike at a foe who did not stand. If I caught a rebel with weapons in his hand, I made the coward turn back and fly: he was not brave even in the night, and no one fought.'

In spite of the untoward conditions evidenced by this conspiracy, Amenemhat carried out his task of imposing firm and settled government upon the distracted land. 'His Majesty,' writes Khnem-hotep, 'came that he might abolish wrong . . . that he might set right that which he found ruined, and that which one city had taken from its sister city, establishing their landmarks as heaven; reckoning their waters according to that which was in the writings; apportioning according to that which was in antiquity, of the greatness of his love of right.' Even making allowance for a courtier's exaggeration, such testimony suggests the work of an industrious and painstaking ruler, personally devoting himself to the righting of that which had gone wrong during the generations of strife and anarchy.

Amenemhat was not satisfied with restoring peace to the land; he took up again that task of extending its boundaries which had been interrupted since the end of the Sixth Dynasty. In the twenty-ninth year of his reign an expedition was sent to Nubia, probably under his son Senusert, who was already co-regent with him; and the old king boasts in his 'Instructions' that he had fought the Wawat, the Mezau, and the Sati (the Nubians, South Nubians, and Asiatics). The conquest is attested by an inscription as far south as Korosko, which runs: 'In the twenty-ninth year of S-hotep-ab-ra [Amenemhat I.], everliving, they came to overthrow the Wawat.' Nine years

before this expedition, and very probably in consequence of the conspiracy already mentioned, Amenemhat associated his son Senusert with him in the monarchy, and in the year after the Nubian War the old king passed away, having reigned for thirty years, and that with such vigour and wisdom that he left his dynasty established with sufficient firmness to endure for more than two centuries.

Senusert I. succeeded his father, apparently without any struggle or attempt at rebellion on the part of the great barons of the realm. But the precautions which he took to secure his accession show that he was not without some fear of trouble. The news of his father's death was sent to him secretly when he was in command of an expedition against the Libyans of the western border. He at once left the army without making any announcement of the event, hastened to the palace stronghold of Thet-taui, and assumed the double crown before any attempt at insurrection could be made. The tale of Sinuhe, one of the most interesting pieces of Egyptian literature, suggests some of the elements of danger and strife which have always been present in Eastern lands on the occasion of a transference of the sceptre. The story begins with the death of Amenemhat. 'In the thirtieth year, the month Paophi, the seventh day, the god entered his horizon, the king S-hotep-ab-ra flew up to heaven and joined the sun's disc, the follower of the god met his maker.' Sinuhe,* who was a young man of high rank, and held a number of important offices, was

* A lately deciphered papyrus gives a more complete version of the beginning of the story of Sinuhe, from which Gardiner concludes that the hero was probably of low origin, and not a member of the royal house. This conclusion, however, only makes his flight and his final reception by the royal family more inexplicable. It would appear that Sinuhe reached Byblos in his flight, and dwelt in Syria further north than has been hitherto supposed. *See also note on p.* 85.

attached to the train of the young co-regent Senusert on the Libyan expedition, and overheard the news which was communicated to the new king. Immediately he was seized with overpowering terror, and fled from the army. The reason of his extraordinary panic is not stated, but it is more than likely that he may have been of the blood-royal, and may have been held to have some pretensions to the crown, in which case Senusert might have been tempted to seize the opportunity of ridding himself of a possible rival. In any case, Sinuhe made all haste to put himself out of harm's way by leaving Egypt. He succeeded in passing the frontier wall and evading the guards, but almost perished of thirst in the Wady Tumilat. 'Thirst fell upon me, and the death-rattle was in my throat, my throat cleaved together, and I said, "It is the taste of death," when suddenly I lifted up my heart and gathered my strength together: I heard the lowing of the herds.' The fugitive was rescued by the Bedawyn, and, passing from tribe to tribe, at length found a resting-place in the land of Edom. He was there welcomed by the chief of the tribe of the Tenu, who gave him his daughter in marriage; and he rose to a prominent position in the tribe, and to considerable wealth. The incidents of his life as an exile are told with vigour. Sinuhe is challenged by a redoubtable champion, whom he overthrows, much after the manner of David in his combat with Goliath, and to whose possessions he succeeds.

But in spite of his comfortable position, his wealth, and his family, the heart of the exile still longed for his native land. At last, in his old age, he could no longer bear the thought of dying away from Egypt, and being buried without any of the funeral observances so dear to the Egyptian heart; and he addressed a petition to King Senusert, begging to be allowed to return and lay his

bones in Egypt. The king returned a gracious answer, inviting him to come back, and promising him a full pardon for the past, the restoration of all his honours and privileges, and a noble tomb with the due funeral rites; but stipulating that his family and property should be left behind him in Edom—a condition which lends probability to the supposition that he may have been in the line of succession to the throne.

On the receipt of this permission the old exile quickly made his decision, handed over his rights and property in Edom to his eldest son, and hastened back under royal escort to Egypt, where he was cordially received by King Senusert and the royal family, though they had some difficulty in recognizing the former Egyptian prince in the aged wanderer who stood before them. The old man records with gusto how he returned to Egyptian habits—the shaving, the fine linen, and the anointing with oil—and how a noble tomb was erected for him; and ends with the wish that he may continue in the king's favour. The story has all the appearance of a genuine piece of autobiography. It shows that in Egypt, as in all Eastern countries, the accession of a new monarch was a time of danger and anxiety, alike to the king and to those members of the royal house who stood too near to the throne for safety; while it also discloses the extraordinary tenacity with which a true Egyptian clung to his native land, and especially the power which his religious ideas of the value of seemly burial exerted upon his actions.

His succession to the throne once assured, Senusert I. proved himself a capable and vigorous ruler. The important inscription of his reign is that of Ameny, at Beni-Hasan. Ameny was nomarch of the Oryx nome, and uncle of the prince Khnem-hotep, of whom we shall hear later. He relates how at the command of Senusert he joined the king in his expedition against Kush (Nubia),

and returned in triumph without the loss of a man, and how on two occasions he was employed, once with 400 and once with 600 men of his nome, to guard the gold convoys coming from the Wady Alaki and from Koptos. Ameny further describes the success of his administration of the Oryx nome, the evenhandedness with which he dealt with his subjects, and the care with which he attended to their welfare, particularly in the years of famine. Altogether his inscription reveals to us the way in which, under the strong hands of the Twelfth Dynasty kings, the turbulent nobles were now settling down into useful administrators, who took a pride in their work and in their relation to the sovereign.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, and the eighth of his sole rule, Senusert sent an expedition into Nubia under a commander named Mentuhotep, who left a large stele at Wady Halfa recording his triumph, and giving a list of the towns and tribes which he had conquered. Unfortunately most of the names of this, the first of many such lists, are not to be identified with any certainty.

The remains of Senusert's public works are found in many localities. At Tanis there are fragments of three of his statues, all of which have been usurped in later days by Merenptah, of the Nineteenth Dynasty. At the Wady Maghareh and at Serabit-el-Khadem there are steles of his reign which show that he had renewed the former Egyptian hold upon the Sinai Peninsula, with its turquoise and copper mines. But the chief structure of his reign was the great temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, of the founding of which we have an account upon a leather roll dating from the time of Amenhotep IV. (Eighteenth Dynasty). The king is represented as forecasting immortality for himself in the great work which he is resolved to begin:

> 'There shall be remembrance of my benefits in his house.
> My name shall be the temple, my monument the lake.'

'The king rose with the diadem and double pen, all men following him. The Lector read the holy book, while extending the cord and laying the foundation on the spot to be occupied by this temple. Then His Majesty departed. . . .' Of this great temple, the daughter of the high-priest of which, according to the Bible account, was married to Joseph, there remains but one relic—the famous obelisk of Heliopolis, oldest of Egyptian obelisks, which still stands at Matariyeh. The total length of Senusert's reign was forty-five years, of which the first ten were in co-regency with his father, while during the last three he associated his own son Amenemhat II. with him on the throne.

The reigns of the two following sovereigns, Amenemhat II. and Senusert II., are comparatively devoid of incident, though the prosperity of the country seems to have been fully maintained during the half-century which they cover. The most interesting record of the period is the picture in the tomb of Khnem-hotep at Beni-Hasan. In it we see two of the officials of Prince Khnem-hotep presenting to their master thirty-seven 'Aamu' or Asiatics, who come, as the record states, 'on account of the *mestchem*' (kohl, or eye-paint). The faces of the Aamu are obviously of Semitic type, and the name of their leader, Absha, or 'father of a present,' is the same as that of the well-known captain of David's body-guard, Abishai. In the dress and appointments of the men and women who compose the party there is, as Petrie remarks, 'no sign of inferior civilization.' It is a civilization of a different type which is presented to us, but the type is quite as advanced, and quite as well adapted to the needs of its habitat, as that of the Egyptian to his (Fig. 10).

The pyramid of King Senusert II. was identified by Petrie at Illahun. The red granite sarcophagus which it contains gives proof that the technical skill of the

FIG. 10.—VISIT OF ASIATICS.
(From a tomb at Beni-Hasan.)

Egyptian workman had not deteriorated, 'the errors of flatness and straightness being matters of thousandths of an inch.' At Kahun, close to the pyramid, Petrie also discovered the remains of the town 'Hat-hetep Senusert' (Senusert is content), which had been occupied by the workmen and overseers and their families during the construction of the pyramid and its temple. The remains still surviving covered an area of 18 acres, within

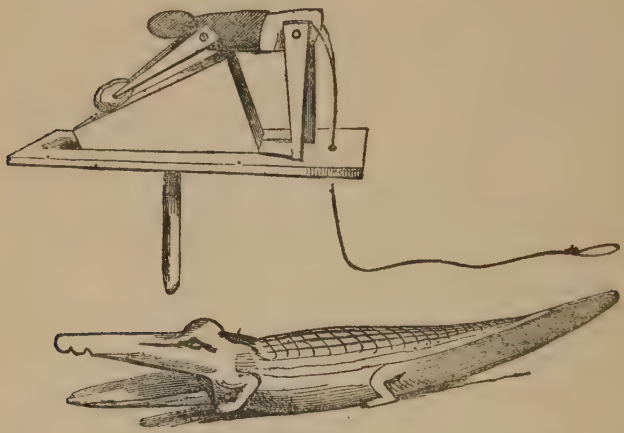


FIG. 11.—CHILDREN'S TOYS.

which about 2,000 rooms were traced and examined. In fact, the whole remaining part of the town has been planned so that the outline of a practically unaltered Twelfth-Dynasty town can be seen, with its larger houses for the officials and its crowded alleys of little dwellings for the workmen. The papyri found at Kahun were of considerable importance, one of them containing the hymn of praise to Senusert III. to be referred to later. But perhaps the most human interest attached to the children's toys—the tops and dolls, the clay crocodiles and hippopotami, and the model boats—which pathetically

suggested that feature of human life which is the same in all the ages, in the masons' quarters at Hetep-Senusert 4,000 years ago as in our own homes to-day.

With the accession of Senusert III. the land entered upon a more active and aggressive period, and it is to this monarch, ever afterwards regarded as one of the great heroes of Egyptian history, that the first steps were due which resulted in the firm establishment of Egyptian dominion in the land between the first and second cataracts of the Nile. In his eighth year Senusert passed up the river on his first Ethiopian campaign. Arriving at the first cataract, he gave orders for his engineers to cut a canal through the granite barrier which impeded the passage of his war-galleys. Such a canal had already been in existence in the days of Una, in the Sixth Dynasty, but had probably since then been choked or destroyed by the scour of the powerful current. At all events, 'His Majesty ordered to be made a canal anew; the name of this canal is "the most excellent of ways of Kha-kau-ra [Senusert] III., ever living." Then His Majesty sailed southward to crush Ethiopia the vile. Length of this canal, 150 cubits; breadth, 20 cubits; depth, 14 cubits.' A thousand years later the canal was used by Tahutmes I., and later was cleared and reopened by the great soldier Tahutmes III., who gave order: 'The fishers of Elephantine shall cut this canal every year.'

Other campaigns followed in Ethiopia, by which the southern boundary of Egypt was advanced as far as the second cataract. At a point about thirty miles above the second cataract the king built, on the hills of Semneh and Kummeh, two forts commanding the passage of the river.* The ruins of these strongholds still survive, and reveal a knowledge of the art of constructing fortifications quite unexpected at such a period, the skill with which their flanking towers are disposed, and the arrangement

* *See note on p.* 85.

by which the upper part of the 80-foot wall recedes at an angle of 70 degrees, making the capture of the fort by scalade almost impossible, being very remarkable. At Semneh the following decree was set up: 'This is the southern frontier; fixed in the eighth year of the reign of His Majesty Kha-kau-ra, ever living. Let it not be permitted to any negro to pass this boundary northward, either on foot or by boat; nor any sort of cattle—oxen, goats, or sheep—belonging to the negroes. Except when any negro comes to trade in the land of Aken, or on any business, let him be well treated. But without allowing any boat of the negroes to pass Heh [Semneh] northward for ever.'

In addition to his Ethiopian conquests, Senusert III. appears to have made a raid into Syria and achieved some success over the Syrian tribes. His fame, however, rests on the conquest of Ethiopia, which added 200 miles of territory to the kingdom; and in later years he was revered as the god of this territory. The hymn in his honour which was found on a papyrus at Kahun is one of the most remarkable illustrations of the divine honours paid to the Egyptian kings, and is also one of the most perfect examples of Egyptian poetic form. A few lines may be taken as an illustration.*

'Twice great are the owners of his city,
for he is a multitude and an host:
Twice great are the owners of his city,
for he is a flood-gate, pouring forth streams of its water-floods.
Twice great are the owners of his city,
for he is a bower, letting every man lie down in the midday heat:
Twice great are the owners of his city,
for he is a screen, like walls built of the sharp stones of Kesem.

* * * * *

* Petrie, 'History of Egypt,' vol. i., p. 182.

'Twice great are the owners of his city,
for he is as the goddess Sekhet to the foes who tread on his boundary.'

The glories of the Twelfth Dynasty culminated in the succeeding reign. It was the lot of Amenemhat III. to reap where his predecessors had sown, and to consolidate with peaceful prudence that which had been gained by their warlike efforts. At Sinai he put the miners' colony on a more permanent footing. Serabit-el-Khadem had gradually become the substitute for the earlier turquoise mines at the Wady Maghareh; and though these still continued to be wrought, the settlement at Serabit was now of greater importance. Already there existed there an ancient rock-shrine, possibly dating from the days of Sneferu, where the Egyptian goddess Hathor was worshipped, curiously enough, as Petrie has shown, with rites which were purely Semitic in form. This temple of 'The Lady of Turquoise' had been added to at various dates, particularly by the earlier kings of the Twelfth Dynasty; but in the time of Amenemhat it was the scene of constant activity, the various records extending from the fourth to the forty-fifth year of his reign. No doubt the fuller equipment of the temple was accompanied by more adequate provision for the material needs of the members of the mining expeditions. Various memorial steles of the period recount the experiences of the mine-captains in this dreary and burning solitude. Of these, the most interesting is that of Hor-ur-ra, who recounts how, having come to the place rather late in the season, he found the conditions most unpromising. His workmen were almost ready to desert, when, thanks to 'The Lady of Turquoise,' the tide turned. 'The desert burned like summer, the mountain was on fire, and the vein exhausted; one morning the overseer who was there questioned the miners, the skilled workers who were used to the mine

and they said: "There is turquoise for eternity in the mountain." At that very moment the vein appeared, and the fortunate Hor-ur-ra was able to return with ample stores of turquoise within three months from the start of his labours.* If the efficiency of the occupation of the Sinai Peninsula may be taken as an index of the central Government's power, the rule of Amenemhat must be considered to have been one of exceptional force and stability.

This is also evidenced by the importance of his domestic works. Of these, the largest were in the Fayum, a district with which the kings of the Twelfth Dynasty and their successors of the Thirteenth are specially identified. In this great hollow of the Libyan Hills, whose lowest level is 120 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, there had existed from ancient days a great lake, mentioned, as we have seen, on the palette of Nar-mer. During the inundation the Nile water flowed into the hollow, and flowed out again as the river fell. Already Amenemhat I. had, by means of a great dyke, reclaimed a considerable portion of the area covered by the lake, and the process of reclamation had been continued by Senusert I. But the great work here was due to Amenemhat III., who, by a vast embankment above twenty miles in length, reclaimed for cultivation an area of about forty square miles. On the corner of this reclaimed land which projected into the lake were placed two colossal statues of the king, carved in quartzite, and about 40 feet high, the pedestals of which still survive at Biahmu. In addition to the reclamation of this land, Amenemhat regulated the inflow and outflow of the inundation water by a system of dykes and sluices, so that the surplus could be used at low Nile for the irrigation of the Delta. This lake, with its dykes and gates, was the

* Maspero, 'The Dawn of Civilization,' pp. 474, 475.

great Lake Moeris of Herodotus and Strabo, believed by them to have been entirely an artificial reservoir. Its value to the Delta district can scarcely be overestimated, as the amount of water held in store by Amenemhat's dykes must have been sufficient to double the volume of the river below the Fayum during the hundred days of low Nile.

In connection with these great irrigation works Amenemhat established at the forts of Semneh and

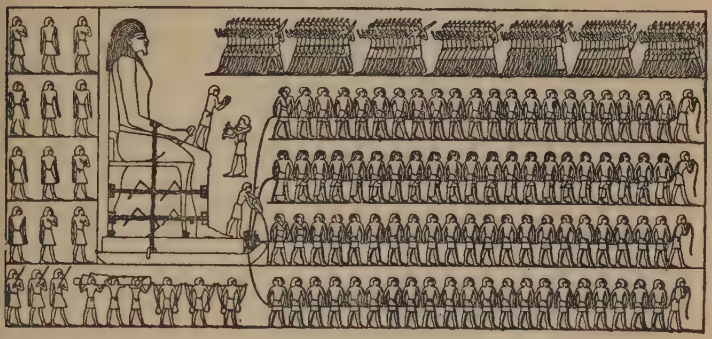


FIG. 12.—TRANSPORT OF A COLOSSUS.

Kummeh, above the second cataract, a system of recording the inundation level year by year, the report being no doubt conveyed by signal to the engineers in charge of the sluices at Lake Moeris. The records still remaining on the rocks reveal the fact that the average level of the flood Nile at Semneh was 25 feet higher than it is at the present time—a fact which would seem to point either to an extraordinarily rapid erosion of the river-bed, or else to some seismic disturbance altering the level of Upper Nubia.

In addition to his works at Lake Moeris, Amenemhat reared in the neighbourhood of his pyramid at Hawâra

the vast building known to classical writers as the Labyrinth. The outline of its foundations can still be traced, and it appears to have been 1,000 feet in length by 800 in breadth. In other words, it was large enough to have contained all the temples at Luqsor and Karnak put together. The purpose of this extraordinary structure is doubtful; but it has been conjectured* that it formed a kind of administrative centre, both religious and secular, for the whole kingdom, in which the councils of the various nomes met from time to time.

Amenemhat's pyramid is chiefly remarkable for the devices of blind passages and huge roofing-blocks by which its architects sought to defeat the efforts of tomb-robbers—unsuccessfully, however, as the great roofing-block of the sarcophagus chamber, 45 tons in weight, has been mined through, and the tomb completely stripped. The sarcophagus chamber itself is a most remarkable example of Egyptian skill in stonework. It is hewn out of a solid block of very hard yellow quartzite, and is cut and polished with exquisite skill. The chamber is 22 feet long by 8 feet wide inside, with walls 2 feet in thickness; and the whole block must weigh about 110 tons

With the close of Amenemhat's long reign of about half a century the Twelfth Dynasty begins to decline; and with a couple of short reigns—those of Amenemhat IV. (nine years) and Queen Sebek-neferu-ra (four years)—this great period draws to a close. The house of Amenemhat had governed Egypt for upwards of 213 years in a manner which completely restored the prosperity and strength of the nation, and led subsequent generations to regard this period, probably not unjustly, as the culminating-point of the nation's history. So far as can be judged, the great reputation of the dynasty is not undeserved. It has to be remembered that but few of its great works have survived,

* *See note on p.* 85.

save in fragments which only suggest how much has been lost, and that in this respect any comparison with the Eighteenth or Nineteenth Dynasties is totally unfair to the earlier period. Yet, even so, the impression left from the fragments which time and war and the usurpations of subsequent generations have allowed to survive is one of a period of firm, capable, and beneficent government, of trade established on a sound basis, and of considerable and meritorious activity in art and literature. The sculptors of the Twelfth Dynasty have indeed lost some of the spontaneity which characterized the earlier work of the Old Kingdom; but, in spite of a more mannered style, such works as the Koptos sculptures of Amenemhat I. and Senusert I., the statues of the latter king, and the fine statue of Amenemhat III., now at St. Petersburg, are second only to the very best, while in mechanical accuracy of workmanship the sarcophagus of Senusert II. and the tomb-chamber of Amenemhat III. are unsurpassed.

In this period the ancient mode of burial in mastabas passed entirely out of fashion, and the great nobles hollowed their tombs in the rocks bordering the Nile. The most notable examples of this style of burial are the tombs at Beni-Hasan, (Plate XXXI.), famous as presenting early specimens of that form of column known as Proto Doric.

The minor arts and crafts had reached a high level of skill. It is difficult to imagine any product of the goldsmith's craft more artistic in design or more delicate in execution than the diadems and jewellery of the Twelfth Dynasty princesses found at Dahshur and at Lahun.

It was, perhaps, in literature that the most distinct advance was made. The language had now reached a definite stage of settlement, and the style of this period was considered in later days to be the standard. The first attempts at a literature of entertainment, as distinct

from historical and 'Wisdom' compositions, are now to be traced. The story of Senusert already mentioned, maintained its popularity for many generations, while its probably genuine autobiographical interest was rivalled by a marvellous account of the haps and mishaps of a sailor shipwrecked on a voyage to Punt, which reads like an anticipation of the adventures of Sindbad. In a more serious vein, the 'Instructions of Amenemhat' have already been alluded to, and the curious composition, 'The Praise of Learning,' though somewhat bourgeois in its smug contempt for all other callings save that of the scribe, is yet of interest, as showing the esteem in which learning was held. In poetry, the most remarkable relic is the 'Hymn to Senusert III.,' of which a few lines have been quoted. However lacking in true poetic fire, it is, at all events, a notable example of careful poetic form. 'The Song of the House of the blessed King Antef that is written before the Harper,' which must have dated originally from the period of the Middle Kingdom, survives in two versions of about the Eighteenth Dynasty. Its tone of sombre moralizing on the shortness of life and its *carpe diem* philosophy remind the reader forcibly of 'the words of the Preacher, the Son of David, King in Jerusalem,' and scarcely suffer by comparison with the bitter philosophy of Ecclesiastes. In religious literature, that version of the 'Book of the Dead'* was now in use which was afterwards the base of the Eighteenth Dynasty Theban recension of this great collection of funerary texts. To this age also belongs the earliest gathering of the folk-tales of old Egypt, including the story of King Khufu and the magician, which has been alluded to in a previous chapter.

Thus, at the close of the Twelfth Dynasty we are presented with the picture of a nation raised to the

* Known as the 'Coffin Texts.' See Chapter XVIII.

summit of prosperity, strong both materially and mentally, and fully conscious of its strength. There is no warning of the catastrophe which lay ahead, and which was destined to lay all these glories in the dust, and to change the triumphs of the Amenemhats and Senuserts into mere far-off memories of a lost golden age.

*Note to p.* 70.—Hall ('Ancient History of the Near East,' p. 157) calls Sinuhe 'a scion of the Egyptian royal house—in fact, probably a younger son of Amenemhat I.'

*Note to p.* 77.—Somers Clarke (*Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii., pp. 155-179) disputes the accuracy of the former reconstructions of Semneh, particularly that of M. M. Perrot and Chipicz, and states that 'there is no evidence to show how the walls were finished at the top.'

*Note to p.* 82.—Without warrant, according to H. R. Hall ('Ancient History of the Near East,' p. 154).

## CHAPTER V

### THE HYKSÔS

THE period which lies between the close of the Twelfth Dynasty and the rise of the Eighteenth is the most confused and obscure in the long history of Egypt. Even its duration is not settled, one school of Egyptologists placing it at no more than 208 years, while another assigns to it more than 1,600—a divergence which is obviously hopeless. In presence of such a conflict of authority, the matter of duration can only be settled by fresh information arising from new discoveries.

Nor is the confusion of kings less than that of dates For the Thirteenth Dynasty, Manetho's History gives nc fewer than sixty kings, and for the Fourteenth seventy-six; while the Turin Papyrus gives the names, or spaces for the names, of at least fifty-five kings of the Thirteenth. It is manifestly impossible that all, or anything like all, of this enormous multitude can have really been kings of Egypt in the full sense of the term. Probably what we must picture to ourselves is a long period of miserable strife, in which pretender after pretender rises for a little while to lordship over a section of the country, only to be thrust down from his position by another with no truer title than his own.

Here and there in the lists there occur names which plainly suggest that this process was going on. The fifth

name in the Turin list of the Thirteenth Dynasty is that of one Aufni, a title which is quite unusual in its form, and from which we may conclude that at this point the succession was broken and a usurper thrust himself to the front either by force or by treachery. Further down in the list occurs another king, who took as his second title the name Mermeshau, or 'General of the Soldiery,' which at once suggests that here was another break into which some soldier of fortune thrust himself. It would appear that this free-lance had more force and attained to a more stable power than most of his predecessors or successors, for there remain at Tanis two fine grey granite statues bearing his name. Strangest of all appears the fact that towards the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty in the Turin Papyrus occurs the name of one 'Nehesi' (the Negro).

It would seem very remarkable if, within so comparatively short a period from the time when Senusert III. conquered Nubia and set up his contemptuous denial of the right of any negro to enter the sacred territory of Egypt, a Nubian conqueror should be found sitting upon the throne of the Pharaohs; and perhaps this is scarcely likely, for the relics of Nehesi are found, not in Upper Egypt, where a southern conqueror's power would naturally be greatest, but in the far north, at Bubastis and Tanis. Probably he may have been some Nubian mercenary in the army of the Pharaohs, who, like Mermeshau, reached out a rough hand and snatched the sceptre from the feeble fingers which held it.

For a little space there is the appearance of a settled rule, when Sebek-hotep III.—whose name, compounded with the title of the crocodile god of the Fayum, suggests that he belonged to this district—holds the throne, probably as co-regent in part of his reign with his brother Nefer-hotep. Sebek-hotep has left relics of his power, in the shape of fine granite statues of himself, as far north as Tanis and as far

south as the island of Arqo,* above the third cataract. He must actually for a time have swayed the united resources of the whole country when he was able not only to hold his own district of the Fayum and the Delta, but even to push the southern frontiers a step further than the point at which they had been fixed by a conqueror like Usertsen III. But of this strong man we know practically nothing except from his statues, and his reign is but one glimmer in the darkness.

The existence and the place of abode of another Pharaoh of this troubled time, Sebek-em-sauf by name, are known to us from the fact that the robbers who rifled his tomb centuries after his death were caught by the commissioners who in the Twentieth Dynasty conducted the inquiry into the state of the royal tombs, and were forced, under the bastinado, to declare how they had violated the tomb, and what they had done with the plunder. 'It was found,' says the commissioners' report, 'that the thieves had violated the monument of King Sebek-em-sauf by undermining the chamber of the ground-level of the monument from the great exterior chamber of the sepulchre of the overseer of the granaries, Neb-Amen. . . . The place of sepulture of the king was found to be void of its occupant; so was the place of sepulture of the principal royal spouse, Nubkhas, his royal wife; the thieves had laid hands on them.'† The confession of one of the thieves runs as follows: 'We found the august mummy of the king with his divine axe beside him, and many amulets and ornaments of gold about his neck. His head was overlaid above with gold, and the august body of the king was wholly covered with gold; his coffins were burnished with gold and silver, within and without, and inlaid with all kinds of stones. We took the gold which we found on the august mummy of the god, and the amulets and ornaments that were about his neck,

* *See note on p.* 96.

† 'Records of the Past,' xii. 106.

and the coffins in which he lay. Having also found the royal wife, we likewise took all that we found with her; and we set fire to their coffins, and stole their furniture which we found with them, vases of gold, of silver, and of bronze, and divided them.'* Even in these dark days of decline it appears that a ruler of Egypt could command a costly funeral. As the tomb thus robbed was at Thebes, Sebek-em-sauf's seat of government must have been there also. Compared with what is known of nine-tenths of the other kings of the period, this is a wealth of information.

Under such conditions as are suggested by this multitude of rulers, who are only 'shadows of names' to us, and whose power can scarcely have been more than nominal, it is manifest that the state of the kingdom must have gone steadily from bad to worse. The whole magnificent fabric of organization which was the memorial of the 200 years' labour of the house of Amenemhat must have been swept away, and the vitality and efficiency of the nation must have sunk to a very low ebb. Thus, with no strong central Government, with her people crushed and dispirited beneath the effects of generations of oppression and civil strife, and with only a disorganized rabble of local militia to take the place of the army with which Senusert III. had swept Nubia, Egypt lay an easy prey to any attacking force which should possess the strength and the unity of purpose which she so conspicuously lacked. The carcass only awaited the gathering of the eagles.

The invading hordes who now entered and occupied a large part of the land of Egypt are known as the Hyksôs, and have for long presented the great enigma of Egyptian history. As to who they may have been, whence they came, and of what nature was their rule, we have little to guide us save vague traditions of a long-subsequent date, as their own personal relics are scanty in the extreme.

* Chabas, quoted by Petrie, i. 224.

The classical passage with regard to them is the extract from the historian Manetho, quoted by Josephus ('Contra Apion,' i. 14): 'We had formerly a king whose name was Timaios. In his time it came to pass, I know not how, that God was displeased with us; and there came up from the East in a strange manner men of an ignoble race, who had the confidence to invade our country, and easily subdued it by their power without a battle. And when they had our rulers in their hands, they burnt our cities, and demolished the temples of the gods, and inflicted every kind of barbarity upon the inhabitants, slaying some, and reducing the wives and children of others to a state of slavery. At length they made one of themselves king, whose name was Salatis; he lived at Memphis, and rendered both the upper and lower regions of Egypt tributary, and stationed garrisons in places which were best adapted for that purpose. But he directed his attention principally to the security of the eastern frontier; for he regarded with suspicion the increasing power of the Assyrians, who, he foresaw, would one day undertake an invasion of the kingdom. And observing in the Saite nome, upon the east of the Bubastite channel, a city which from some ancient theological reference was called Avaris; and finding it admirably adapted to his purpose, he rebuilt it, and strongly fortified it with walls, and garrisoned it with a force of 240,000 men completely armed. To this city Salatis repaired in summer, to collect his tribute and pay his troops, and to exercise his soldiers in order to strike terror into foreigners.'

Certain portions of this narrative of course bear obviously the marks of exaggeration and unauthenticity; the numbers are probably vastly exaggerated, as in many ancient documents. But there are some statements which are fairly clear, and accordant with what is known from other sources. There was plainly an invasion by a Semitic race, who, in

the disorganized state of the country, gradually established themselves in possession, making their place of arms at Avaris, or Hat-uart,* in the north. After a period of gradual penetration by these tribes, there follows a period of more or less settled rule under six kings, during which period bickering with the native Egyptians seems to be pretty constant; and, finally, a period of what might be called the War of Independence, when the Egyptian princes of the Thebaid, who had been vassals of the Semitic power, assert their freedom, and after a struggle succeed in driving out their enemies. The whole duration of this foreign dominion is stated at 511 years; Breasted, however, regards this as preposterous, and says that 'a hundred years is ample for the whole period.' †

Now, for some of the facts above stated we have the confirmation of historical inscriptions. Thus an inscription of the famous Queen Hatshepsut at Speos Artemidos runs as follows: 'I have restored that which was ruins, I have raised up that which was unfinished, since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and the Barbarians were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which had been made, while they ruled in ignorance of Ra.' ‡ Further, the inscription of Aahmes, son of Abana, to be referred to later, shows that the expulsion of these invaders cost the princes of Thebes a long war, culminating in a heavy siege of Hat-uart; while of 400 years later date is the legend recorded in the First Sallier Papyrus, which professes to give the story of how the war between the Hyksôs King Apepa and Seqenenra of Thebes began.

The name Hyksôs is derived by Manetho, according to Josephus, from the words 'Hyk,' a king, and 'Sos,' a shepherd—the title meaning, therefore, 'Shepherd-King.' This derivation is substantially accurate, and probably the true form of the word may have been Hiku-Shasu

* *See note on p. 96.* † *See note on p. 96.*

‡ Breasted, 'History of Egypt,' p. 215.

(Prince of the Desert-Folk), or Hik-Khaskhut (Desert-Prince). The continuation of the passage which Josephus quotes from Manetho asserts that they were said by some to be Arabians, while another version puts them down as Phœnicians; plainly, in any case, they were of Semitic origin. Their rule over Egypt was not so stringent as to exclude that of some of the native dynasts in their own localities. The Theban princes of the Seventeenth Dynasty, in particular, appear to have ruled in Middle Egypt, though probably at first under the suzerainty of the Hyksôs kings.

The memorials of these Semitic sovereigns are exceedingly scanty; but such as do exist are tolerably widespread, being found as far north as Tanis and Bubastis, and as far south as Gebelen. Indeed, the relics of one king, Khyan, who may very probably be set down as a Hyksôs ruler, have been found at places as distant from Egypt and from one another as Baghdad, and Knossos in Crete. One of Khyan's titles is somewhat peculiar. He calls himself 'Encompasser of the Lands.' Another Hyksôs king, Apepa, in an inscription on an altar at Cairo, gives thanks to his god Sutekh, 'who has set all lands under his feet.' From these indications Breasted has suggested that in the Hyksôs conquest of Egypt we have a trace of the history of a great vanished Semitic empire extending from the Euphrates to the first cataract of the Nile—'an empire of which all other evidence has perished for the reason that Avaris, the capital of its rulers, was in the Delta, where, like so many other Delta cities, it suffered a destruction so complete that we cannot even locate the spot on which it once stood.' Further, he would see in the stubborn resistance offered to the arms of Tahutmes III. by the town of Qedesh, on the Orontes, and in the evident hegemony of this town among the tribes of the surrounding country, the evidences of the last stand of this once great Hyksôs empire. The specula-

tion is an inviting one, but, as Professor Breasted himself remarks, 'such precarious combinations should not be made without a full realization of their hazardous character.'

Of the actual Hyksôs sovereigns, there are relics of Khyan, of at least two Apepas, and of one king whose name reads as Yaqeb-her, or Jacob-her, a title which has obvious resemblance to a familiar Bible name. Though they came in as Semitic conquerors, bringing with them their own civilization and their Semitic god Sutekh, they must have been rapidly Egyptianized by the advanced civilization around them.

Indications of this process are not wanting. They use Pharaonic titles of regular form, and have scarabs like the other Pharaohs; their statues are carved in the familiar royal style, and they dedicate temples much as did their predecessors of the native stock. One of the Apepas records at Bubastis how he had erected 'many columns and a gate of brass to this god,' while of another the First Sallier Papyrus says: 'King Apepa built for Sutekh a temple of goodly and enduring workmanship; King Apepa [appointed] festivals, days for making sacrifice to Sutekh [with all rites] that are performed in the temple of Ra-Harmakhis.' Sutekh himself became speedily assimilated to the Egyptian god Set. The 'wisdom of the Egyptians' was at least not wholly extinguished during the period of foreign dominance, a well-known mathematical papyrus dating from the reign of the first Apepa.

During this time of Hyksôs rule, the later members of the family of princes which is known as the Seventeenth Dynasty had been maintaining a kind of vassal sovereignty at Thebes. The earlier members of the dynasty are not known, but it emerges into notice with a succession of three kings bearing the name of Seqenen-ra. One of these was the contemporary of a Hyksôs King Apepa; and of their

relations we have a curious picture in the First Sallier Papyrus. Apepa evidently desires to bully the Theban prince either into abject submission or open rebellion, and to this end he sends a message to him, which, so far as it can be made out, seems to consist of a complaint that the sleep of the Hyksôs king in his Delta capital was broken by the splashing of the hippopotami in the canals at Thebes, 600 miles away. On the receipt of this preposterous complaint, 'the prince of the south land called to him his great chiefs, his captains, and his prudent generals, and he told unto them all the words about which King Apepa had sent unto him. And behold, they were silent with one accord in great grief, neither knew they to reply good or evil.' The rest of the story is lost, and we are left to imagine how the diplomacy over this original *casus belli* proceeded. Probably this is more or less fiction, a story invented by some later imagination to account for the outbreak of war. At the same time there may be a germ of fact in it. The Hyksôs king may have felt that the power of the Theban princes was becoming a menace to his own supremacy, and may have used any pretext to pick a quarrel in order to break the strength of the southern dynasty before it was too late. War apparently followed, and was prosecuted during several reigns; for the third Seqenen-ra, whose mummy was found at Deir-el-Bahri, had been slain in battle, most likely during this lengthened contest. Seqenen-ra III. was succeeded by Ka-mes, whose spear-head, axe, and dagger, found in the coffin of Queen Aah-hotep, suggest a warlike prince who would carry on the struggle in which Seqenen-ra had fallen; but of the incidents of the war in his reign we know nothing.

At last under Aahmes, the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the long conflict reached its close, and the foreign usurpers were finally driven out of the land. For the concluding stage of the war we have, fortunately, an authority of very high value in an inscription in the tomb

of one of the warriors of the Pharaoh Aahmes, the admiral Aahmes, son of Abana, of El-Kab. This 'captain-general of marines,' as he styles himself, details his service under King Aahmes, and the various honours which fell to him for his bravery. After a statement of his earlier days in the service and his promotion for valour, he goes on: 'One sat down before the city of Hat-uart, and I was valorous on foot in presence of His Majesty. I was promoted to the ship called *Shining in Memphis*. We fought on the water in the Pazedku canal of Hat-uart. Here I captured and carried off a hand, mention of which

FIG. 13.—ASIATIC PRISONERS DRAWING STONE.

was made to the royal reporter, and there was given to me the golden collar of valour. There was fighting a second time at this place, and a second time I captured and carried off a hand, and there was given to me a second time the gold of valour. There was fighting at Ta-Kemt at the south of this city, and I carried away prisoner a live man. . . . Mention of this was made to the royal reporter, and I was presented with gold once more. We took Hat-uart, and I carried off as captives from thence one man and three women, in all four heads; and His Majesty gave them to me for slaves. We sat down before Sharhana in the year five, and His Majesty took it. I carried off from thence captives two women and one hand; and there was given me the gold of valour.'*

Thus it appears that under King Aahmes the struggle came to a head with the siege of the great Hyksôs stronghold of Avaris, and that after several separate

* Petrie, ii. 22.

assaults and probably a long siege the city was captured, and the Hyksôs were driven out. The mention of the capture of Sharhana—Sharuhen, in Southern Palestine—would suggest that the expelled usurpers had found a refuge there, and that Aahmes was determined to leave no enemy so near to his borders.

The influence of the Hyksôs upon Egypt must have been very great. To them, no doubt, was due the introduction of the horse and the war-chariot, destined to be of such importance in the future Egyptian wars of conquest; to the strife with them the native race owed that military training which enabled Tahutmes I. and Tahutmes III. to enter upon the career of conquest which established Egypt as mistress over the whole of Syria up to the River Euphrates; and, not least, it was their mingling with the native population that began that Semitizing of the race which was hastened by the conquests of the great soldier-kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and culminated in the extraordinary reign of Akhenaten.

Thus, finally, after a long period of misery, of foreign tyranny, and of war, the kingdom stood once more free and united under a king who had proved his strength. Another period of glory, of greatness, and then of decay, lay before the land—a period distinguished above those which had preceded it by the fact that now Egypt began to step forth definitely beyond her eastern boundary, and to take rank as a world-power—the first of the great empires of the East.

The question of the Exodus and the Expulsion of the Hyksôs is discussed in Chapter XVIII.

*Note to p.* 88.—It has been suggested that this statue was transported to Arqo by the Ethiopians; but this is very doubtful.

*Note to p.* 91.—'The House of the Leg'—probably so called from a tradition that one of the legs of Osiris was found there by Isis. *Cf.* p. 341.

*Note to p.* 91.—'Almost impossible,' says Hall ('Hist. Near East,' p. 217), who contends that Petrie's long dates are also impossible.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE EMPIRE-BUILDERS

THE task which lay before the earlier rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty was practically the making of a new Egypt. Between the long period of internecine strife which had preceded the coming of the Hyksôs, the devastations wrought during the barbarian rule, and the inevitable wastage of the War of Independence, the whole fabric of the State must have been wrecked, even as the temples of its gods had been ravaged by the foreign conquerors. The task of reconstruction can have been no light one; but Aahmes and his immediate successors had on their side certain factors which had not favoured the earlier reconstruction under the Antefs and Mentuhoteps. The trouble with the great feudal lords no longer existed. Very probably the bulk of them had been killed out in the period of civil strife, or in the Hyksôs War, as the turbulent English nobles were thinned during the Wars of the Roses; at all events, we hear of no further trouble from the aristocracy, with the possible exception of one movement reported during the closing stages of the Hyksôs struggle. The new Egyptian State was a despotism pure and simple, in which the will of the divine Pharaoh, 'the good god,' was law.

Again, the Pharaoh had now at his command a brave and efficient standing army. We have no longer to

do with the old local militia, embodied for temporary emergencies, inefficient for want of organization, and liable to prefer local to royal or national interests; we find instead a thoroughly organized force of all arms—heavy-armed infantry, light-armed infantry (including the famous and dreaded Egyptian bowmen) and chariotry. The last arm, an importation of the Hyksôs, plays from now onwards a part of ever-growing importance in the continual wars of the Pharaohs. This new and formidable

FIG. 14.—EGYPTIAN WAR-CHARIOT.

weapon was entirely devoted to the king, and was attached to him by the memory of struggles endured and victories gained in common.

Once more, and perhaps most important of all, the expulsion of the Hyksôs apparently brought with it, as such struggles often do, a pronounced elevation in the national spirit. There was never, on the whole, a more egregious misconception of national character than that of Ruskin when he described the essentially pacific and unwarlike Egyptian race as 'this great warrior-nation'; but it is to the Egypt of this period, if of any, that the

title can, even in the faintest degree, apply. It was, indeed, only a comparatively brief outburst of warlike enthusiasm which seemed to promise the transformation of the Egyptian into a world-conqueror, but it sufficed to build up and to maintain for a few generations the first of the great military empires of the world.

Heavy, then, as the task of reconstruction must have been, the time and the circumstances were not unfavourable; and in the kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty there was found ability, both civic and military, adequate to the call.

The great triumph of the reign of Aahmes was, of course, the expulsion of the Hyksôs. His victory was followed up by a raid into Palestine, during which he captured the city of Sharuhen, and penetrated as far north as Zahi (Phœnicia), where one of his officers, Aahmes Pen-nekheb, a relation of Aahmes, son of Abana, mentions that he brought in as trophies the hands of ten slain enemies. Returning from Palestine, the king found it necessary to deal with the state of affairs on his southern frontier, where the Nubian tribes had evidently taken advantage of the disturbed state of the country to break the bounds which Senusert III. had appointed. The campaign of Aahmes in the South was brief and victorious. The son of Abana again displayed his valour in the capture of two live prisoners and the slaughter of three Nubian warriors, and was rewarded with fresh gifts of gold, and with the captives whom he had taken. 'Then came His Majesty down the river, his heart swelled with valour and victory; he had conquered the people of the South and of the North.'

Two subsequent flickers of strife are recorded by the old captain-general, one under a leader named Aata, and another under Teta-an. It is uncertain whether these were native rebellions or the last despairing efforts of the

Hyksôs. They were quickly put down with a strong and ruthless hand, and thereafter the Pharaoh was left in peace to carry on the organization of his Government, and to repair the ravages of war. The latter part of the reign appears to have been occupied in the restoration of the temples at the various religious centres, and in other peaceful tasks; and when King Aahmes died at about the age of fifty, after an eventful reign of twenty-five years, the work of restoration had at least been fairly set on foot. As the founder of the dynasty, Aahmes was long accorded divine worship, an honour which he shared with his sister-wife, Aahmes Nefertari, who, according to the Egyptian custom of reckoning the direct line of descent through the female side of the house, was looked upon as the great ancestress and foundress of the Egyptian royal line.

Amenhotep I. (1562-1541 B.C.), who succeeded to the throne, immediately found work upon his hands in Nubia. His father's brief expedition had not quelled the spirit of the southern tribes, and the young king found it necessary to proceed in person to assert the power of Egypt. He carried his advance as far as the second cataract, and his campaign was completely successful. Both Aahmes, son of Abana, who was now over forty years old, and his younger relative, Aahmes Pen-nekheb, distinguished themselves. 'Behold,' says the admiral, 'I was at the head of our soldiers; and I fought in very truth. His Majesty was witness of my valour, as I carried off two hands, and brought them to His Majesty. We pursued his people and his cattle. I took a living prisoner, and brought him to His Majesty.' The triumph in Nubia would appear, however, to have been suddenly interrupted by news of a Libyan invasion in the North. Aahmes goes on to say that he 'brought His Majesty back to Egypt in two days from the upper well' (the second cataract?); for which feat he was again rewarded

with gold, and with the title 'Warrior of the King.' This great haste, meaning a boat-journey of at least 200 miles in two days, must have been rendered necessary by a very urgent call for Amenhotep's presence in Egypt; and the explanation of it is afforded by Aahmes Pennekheb, who states that in the war against the Libyans he captured three hands.

These two campaigns apparently sum up the warlike exploits of Amenhotep I., though it is possible that he also made an expedition into Asia. Of this incident, however, there is no record of any sort, and its occurrence is only an inference from a statement of Tahutmes I. as to the limits of his kingdom. Like his father, Amenhotep employed the leisure of the latter part of his reign in rebuilding and adorning the temples at Thebes and elsewhere.

With the son of Amenhotep, Tahutmes I. (1541-1516 B.C.), we reach the first of the great soldier-kings of the Empire. His title to the throne, according to Egyptian ideas, was not by any means a perfect one, for his mother, Sen-senb, was not of pure royal blood. He was therefore married to his half-sister, the princess Aahmes, whose descent was pure on both sides, and his title was thus made valid. His first act was to send out a coronation edict, which was fortunately engraved and set up by the Governor of Nubia. It runs as follows: 'This is the royal rescript to cause thee to know that My Majesty is risen as king on the throne of Horus, without equal for ever. My titles are to be made as "Horus the mighty bull, beloved of Maat; Uniter of the double diadems, rising as a flame, most valiant; the golden Horus in whose years is prosperity, the giver of life; King of the Upper and Lower Lands, Aa-kheper-ka-ra; Son of Ra, Tahuti-mes, living for ever to eternity." Cause the offerings of the gods of Abu in the South to be made by the

will of the prince (life, health, strength), the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aa-kheper-ka-ra. Cause thou that the oath be administered in the name of My Majesty, (life, health, strength), born of the royal mother Sen-senb. This is written that thou mayest know it, and that the royal house is safe and strong. The first year, Phamenoth, day twenty-one. Day of coronation.'

One of the first acts of the new reign was the recognition of the permanent importance of Nubia to the Empire. Hitherto the country had been administered in a more or less casual fashion by an official whose chief duty was to collect the tribute; but now the prince Turo was appointed viceroy with the title 'Governor of the South Countries, King's Son of Kush.' Turo's capabilities were immediately put to the proof by the advance of an expedition commanded by the king in person. Arriving at Aswan, Tahutmes found that the old canal which had been cut by order of Senusert III. had become choked, and the viceroy records how it was again made available for the Nubian wars. One of his three inscriptions runs: 'Year 3, Pakhons 20, His Majesty passed this canal in force and power in his campaign to crush Ethiopia the vile—Prince Turo.' Another of the same date adds: 'His Majesty commanded to clear this canal, after he had found it filled with stones, so that no boat could pass up it. He passed up it, his heart rejoicing.' In the passage of the cataract, Aahmes, son of Abana, now probably over sixty years of age, had another opportunity of distinguishing himself, 'in the bad water in the passage of the ships,' where presumably there had been some trouble which called for the exertions of a skilled captain; and in consequence the veteran was raised 'to the dignity of a captain-general of marines.'

Somewhere between the second and third cataracts the fleet and army of Tahutmes met the Nubian forces, and a

battle took place. The king engaged in personal combat with the Nubian chief, and slew him. 'His Majesty became furious like a panther, and he shot his first arrow, which stuck in the breast of that wretch.' The fall of their leader broke the resistance of the Nubian forces, who fled, 'fainting before the king's asp' (the royal emblem of the Uræus on the front of the war-helmet). Many captives were taken—so many, in fact, that Pen-nekheb, who was also employed on this expedition, did not trouble to count the number of his prisoners. The king pushed his advance beyond the third cataract, and erected a fortress on the Island of Tombos, with a tablet of victory, which states that he ruled from Tombos, in the South, to the Euphrates, in the North—a statement which, if it be not a mere rhetorical exaggeration, would seem to lend colour to the suggestion of an unrecorded campaign of conquest in Asia under Amenhotep I. Tahutmes then turned northward again, bearing at the bow of his war-galley a ghastly trophy of victory in the shape of the body of the Nubian chief, which was kept hanging there, head downwards, 'in evil plight,' as old Aahmes remarks until His Majesty landed at Thebes. Thus the power of the Nubians was, for the time being, thoroughly broken; and, with his appetite for conquest whetted by the complete success of his first campaign, Tahutmes turned his face towards Syria.

Here he had to meet with enemies of very different calibre from the undisciplined and half-armed negroes who had been his easy prey in the battle on the Nile. It is true that he had not to face the opposition of any single power adequate to contend with him on equal terms. The Hittites, who proved such stubborn adversaries to the arms of Sety and Ramses II., were as yet only beginning to appear on the Syrian horizon, though already their manufactures had begun to penetrate the

whole land; and, save for the brief period during which they asserted themselves as masters of Northern Syria, there was never any single dominating power in the region over which Egypt was now seeking to establish her rule. The configuration of the land, broken up as it is by various ranges of mountains, and with its whole coast-line practically isolated from its interior, lent itself rather to the establishment of a number of petty principalities, each independent of its neighbour; and in practice these generally proved, from the earliest to the latest day of their history, incapable of opposing a united front to an invader for any length of time. Of these principalities, the chief was that associated with the town of Qedesh, on the Orontes, which later proved itself sufficiently formidable to require the utmost efforts of so great a soldier as Tahutmes III. to crush its resistance.

The inhabitants of the land were of Semitic origin, and were characterized by a civilization quite as advanced as that of the Egyptians, though of a very different type. Indeed, Syria was scarcely more profoundly influenced by the civilization and the arms of its conqueror than Egypt by the arts and the religion of her conquest. One branch of the race had pushed its way down to the sea, and was rapidly developing into that great commercial nation which we know as the Phœnicians. The trading establishments of this people were already widely scattered along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and their galleys served as one of the links of communication between the land of Egypt and the East Mediterranean civilization whose remains are so rapidly being brought to light. Egypt, therefore, had to deal with a race quite as advanced materially as her own people, but fatally handicapped, in view of the approaching struggle, by its situation and traditions.

As yet no interference was to be looked for from the

great nations of the Euphrates and Tigris. Babylon was passing through a period of decline, which unfitted her to be the serious rival of the great southern power; and Assyria was only beginning to gird herself for the long struggle which was to decide who should be the dominant power in Mesopotamia. On the whole, therefore, the time of Tahutmes's invasion was most favourable to his prospects of success; and his advance was boldly pushed into the very heart of the land. Qedesh apparently made no serious dispute with the Egyptian troops on this occasion; and without a battle Tahutmes succeeded in reaching 'Naharina,' or Upper Mesopotamia. Here, at last, he was faced by an organized resistance of the tribes which had gathered in defence of their independence, or as Aahmes, son of Abana, puts it, from the Egyptian point of view, 'His Majesty found that enemy who had plotted conspiracy.'

Unfortunately, there is no detailed account of the battle which ensued. It ended, as might have been expected, in a complete victory for the war-hardened Egyptian army, and the tribes were scattered with heavy loss. 'His Majesty made a great slaughter of them; an immense number of live captives was carried off by His Majesty from his victories.' This Syrian campaign was the last in which the veteran Aahmes, who has been our companion and guide during the last three reigns, took part. Old man as he was now, his vigour was still unabated. 'Behold, I was at the head of our soldiers, and His Majesty saw my valour as I seized upon a chariot, its horses, and those who were on it, as living captives; I took them to His Majesty, and I was once more presented with the gold.' But the time had now come for the old captain-general of marines to lay down his arms, and we hear no more of him save his last aspiration. 'I have grown up, and have reached old age

[over ninety, as Petrie computes, when his inscription was cut], my honours are like . . . and I shall rest in my tomb which I myself have made.'* His younger namesake, Pen-nekheb, triumphantly maintained the credit of El-Kab in the Syrian War. 'Again I acted for the King Aa-kheper-ka-ra, justified: I took for him in the land of Naharina twenty-one hands, a horse, and a chariot.'

After his victory, Tahutmes appears to have advanced

FIG. 15.—ASIATIC PRISONERS.

as far as the Euphrates, and to have set up a triumphal stele on its banks. The only record of this incident is the statement of Tahutmes III., that 'he placed another [tablet] where was the tablet of his father, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aa-kheper-ka-ra.' Thus, with her very first spring, Egypt had clutched with a strong hand an extent of rich and fertile territory which not even the great conqueror Tahutmes III. was able to hold without difficulty; though it must be remembered that the opposition which he encountered was evidently of

* 'Records of the Past,' vi. 10.

a much more stubborn and tenacious character than that which his grandfather had to face.

So far as is known, the Asiatic campaign was the last of the warlike exploits of Tahutmes I. On his return to Egypt he was able to employ the spoil of his campaign, and the tribute which now flowed in from the conquered country, in the restoration of the temples, which still bore the marks of the Hyksôs ravages. At Karnak he reared two great pylons or gateways in front of the temple of Amen, and before one of them he erected the great obelisk, 76 feet in height, which still stands there, lofty and impressive, though overtopped by the still larger monolith reared by his great daughter Hatshepsut, and somewhat disfigured by the crowding in of Ramesside inscriptions on either side of the single line of hieroglyphics which it originally bore.

As his reign began to draw to a close, Tahutmes evidently felt it necessary to take steps to secure the peaceful transfer of the crown. He may well have found himself involved in difficulties with the strict legitimists of the nation, for, as already mentioned, his title to the throne was not perfect. So long as his wife Aahmes lived, her pure lineage would be held to legitimize his title; but if, as is not improbable, she predeceased him by some years, his position may have become somewhat insecure. Of the children borne to him by Aahmes, only one, a daughter, Hatshepsut, had survived; by another wife, Mut-nefert, he had a son named after himself. Either of these children held a purer title to the throne than did the old king, and he resolved to secure himself by making one of them co-regent. His choice fell upon his daughter Hatshepsut, possibly because she was several years older than his son Tahutmes, possibly, also, because Hatshepsut may have already given evidence of that ability which distinguished her reign, and which ranks her

as one of the great woman-rulers of history, while the young Tahutmes, judging from his early death, and from the evidence afforded by his mummy, must always have been somewhat of a weakling physically. Accordingly Hatshepsut (1516-1481 B.C.) was associated with her father in the monarchy, and an inscription on the north face of the second of his pylons at Karnak, after recounting the benefits which he had conferred on the land, prays to Amen to give 'the Black Country and the Red Country to my daughter, the Queen of the South and North, Maat-ka-ra, living for ever, even as thou hast given them unto me.' Subsequent to this association of Hatshepsut, the old king married her to his son Tahutmes, thus strengthening the latter's title to the throne.

Probably Tahutmes I. did not long survive this event; and it does not appear that the right of his son to succeed was in any way questioned when the old king passed away. Tahutmes II. (1516-1503 B.C.) was barely seated on the throne, however, when the usual Nubian rising took place. 'Then one came with good news to His Majesty, "that the vile Kush has gone into rebellion . . . to injure the people of Egypt, and to raid their cattle, even beyond the gates which thy father built in his victory to beat back the rebellious foreigners."' The stock statement follows, that 'His Majesty raged like a panther.' 'As I live, as Ra loves me, as my father, lord of the gods, praises me, I will not leave a male alive.' In spite of this warlike ardour on the part of the sickly young prince of seventeen, he does not appear to have accompanied the punitive expedition which went up the Nile to bring the Nubians to their senses. There was the usual slaughter of the barbarians; one son of the Prince of Kush was brought down alive as a prisoner to be presented to His Majesty: 'this nation was made as bondsmen of His Majesty, as in old time.'

The Nubian revolt was followed by an expedition into Palestine, in which Aahmes Pen-nekheb distinguished himself once more. 'I followed the king Aa-kheper-en-ra [Tahutmes II.], justified; I brought away from the land of the Shasu very many prisoners, I do not reckon them.' For his services on this occasion he was rewarded by the king with 'two gold bracelets, six collars, three bracelets of lapis lazuli, and a silver war-axe.' Pen-nekheb's valiant career ended with this campaign, and he followed his fellow-townsman, the son of Abana, into well-earned repose. No other war of Tahutmes II. is known, and, indeed, it is doubtful if he ever saw any personal service.

The temple which had been partially planned and begun by his father at Deir-el-Bahri was carried on by him; but practically the whole of the work here is due to Hatshepsut. At Karnak and elsewhere there is work which owes at least its inception to him. But during his short reign he appears to have been dominated by the strong personality of his wife, and after thirteen years he died, at the age of thirty. His mummy still bears traces of disease, and affords evidence that he can never have been a physically strong man. By his marriage with Hatshepsut he had two daughters—Neferu-ra, who died young, and Meryt-ra Hatshepset, who was afterwards married to Tahutmes III. The paternity of the latter king is matter of some dispute. The little evidence available makes it certain that his mother, Aset, was not of royal blood, but was merely a concubine; but it is not certain whether his father was Tahutmes I. or Tahutmes II. On the whole, the balance of probability seems to be in favour of his having been the son of Tahutmes II., and thus both the nephew and the stepson of Hatshepsut.

During the brief reign of her husband, Hatshepsut had always been the real driving force of the Government.

She was now left, at the age of thirty-seven, in the full maturity of her abilities, with the reins of power completely in her hands. The only possible claimant to the throne was her nephew Tahutmes III. According to Egyptian ideas, he had no direct claim, as his mother was not of true solar blood. Hatshepsut, however, recognized his paternal title by associating him with herself on the throne from the very beginning of her sole reign, public documents being dated in his name; while as soon as the two young people reached marriageable age she married him to her daughter Meryt-ra, thus giving him a valid claim to the succession. No doubt, later on, as Tahutmes grew to full manhood, and to the consciousness of his own supreme abilities, the secondary position in which he was held by Hatshepsut must have chafed him; his treatment of her monuments is evidence of that; but, so far as can be judged at this distance of time, one fails to see that Hatshepsut could have done for him much more than she did.

For twenty-two years, then—from the death of her husband to her own death at the age of fifty-nine—Hatshepsut was the real, though not the nominal, ruler of Egypt; and the work which she accomplished during that period entitles her to rank, not, perhaps, with the very greatest of the Egyptian sovereigns, but, at all events, not very far behind them. The military genius of her father had apparently so impressed the sense of the might of Egypt upon the surrounding nations that during her sole reign we hear nothing of any warlike expedition. The time was one of peace and prosperity, and was signalized by the erection of some of the most beautiful and priceless structures which remain to us from ancient Egypt. Already by the third year of her reign (or the sixteenth, reckoning her joint rule with Tahutmes II.) she had turned to the working of the turquoise mines

1. TEMPLE OF DEIR-EL-BAHRI, COLONNADE ON MIDDLE TERRACE.
2. TEMPLE OF DEIR-EL-BAHRI, GENERAL VIEW.

at the Wady Maghareh; and a large part of the miners' temple at Serabit-el-Khadem was due to her and to Tahutmes III., the so-called 'Shrine of Kings' being of her foundation, and bearing a long inscription of hers. Her cartouches are here intimately associated with those of her successor, and there is no trace of that attempt to erase her name which occurs elsewhere.

But the chief work with which her name is associated is the great mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahri. This remarkable building is unique among Egyptian temples, though to some extent it follows the suggestion given by the pyramid temple of Mentuhotep III., which lies close beside it. The great temple rises in three terraces up the sloping ground towards the towering yellow limestone cliffs, until the last terrace stands close against them. Up the central axis there ran from terrace to terrace a great staircase, which now survives in the form of an inclined plane. The face of each terrace is colonnaded, and the uppermost terrace bears a row of chambers, of which the middle one is hewn deep into the rock and lined with limestone slabs sculptured in relief. The colonnades (Plate VI.) remain the most convincing evidence of Egyptian skill in this graceful form of construction. The queen's design was to make of this unique temple a kind of paradise for Amen, in which the incense-trees and the other products of that land of Punt, which the Egyptians called 'God's Land,' should be found growing to delight the heart of the god. For this purpose it was necessary that an expedition should be made to Punt on a scale sufficiently large to provide for the bringing back of the considerable quantity of material required. Hatshepsut resolved that such an expedition should be sent, being incited, as she tells us, by the direct command of Amen. 'A command was heard in the sanctuary, a behest of the god himself, that the ways

which lead to Punt should be explored, and that the roads to the Ladders of Incense should be trodden.'

Communication with Punt, which had formerly been a regular feature of Egyptian trade, had now been interrupted for long, no doubt by the troublous times which had come and gone since S-ankh-ka-ra had his fleet under Henu plying on the Red Sea. 'None now climbed the Ladders of Incense, none of the Egyptians; they knew of them from hearsay, from the stories of people of ancient times.' Amen, therefore, described the land to the queen, and promised her his direction in her enterprise. 'The Ladders of Incense is a secret province of God's Land; it is, in truth, a place of delight. I created it, and I thereto lead thy Majesty . . . that the aromatic gum may be gathered at will, that the vessels may be joyfully laden with living incense-trees, and with all the products of the earth.'*

With such august encouragement, the queen prepared her expedition. A small fleet was equipped and sent out with an escort of soldiers under command of an envoy, Nehsi by name. The ships apparently reached the Red Sea by means of a canal, for the same vessels are shown both upon the Nile and the sea, and there is no mention of any transhipment of cargo. Voyaging down the Red Sea, they reached in safety the land of Punt, which may have been part of Somaliland. Their arrival evidently created much interest among the Puntites, who had never seen Egyptian traders, but knew of them by tradition. The Egyptian envoy was received by the Puntite chief, Parihu, who came to meet him accompanied by his wife, a lady whose extraordinary development of adipose tissue suggests that the Puntite ideal of beauty was much the same as that of those African tribes of the present day who regard fat as the one essential. The merchandise which

* Maspero, 'The Struggle of the Nations,' pp. 246, 247.

had been brought in the ships was duly set forth, protected by a guard of soldiers, and the bargaining began. The purchases with which the ships were finally laden were various and valuable, including ivory, gold, ebony, myrrh, leopard-skins, dog-headed apes, greyhounds, oxen, slaves, and, most valuable of all, thirty-one incense-trees, with their roots carefully done up in balls of earth, and protected by baskets. These were destined to be planted on the terraces at Deir-el-Bahri. The lading being completed, the fleet set sail, and, after a prosperous voyage, reached Thebes in safety.

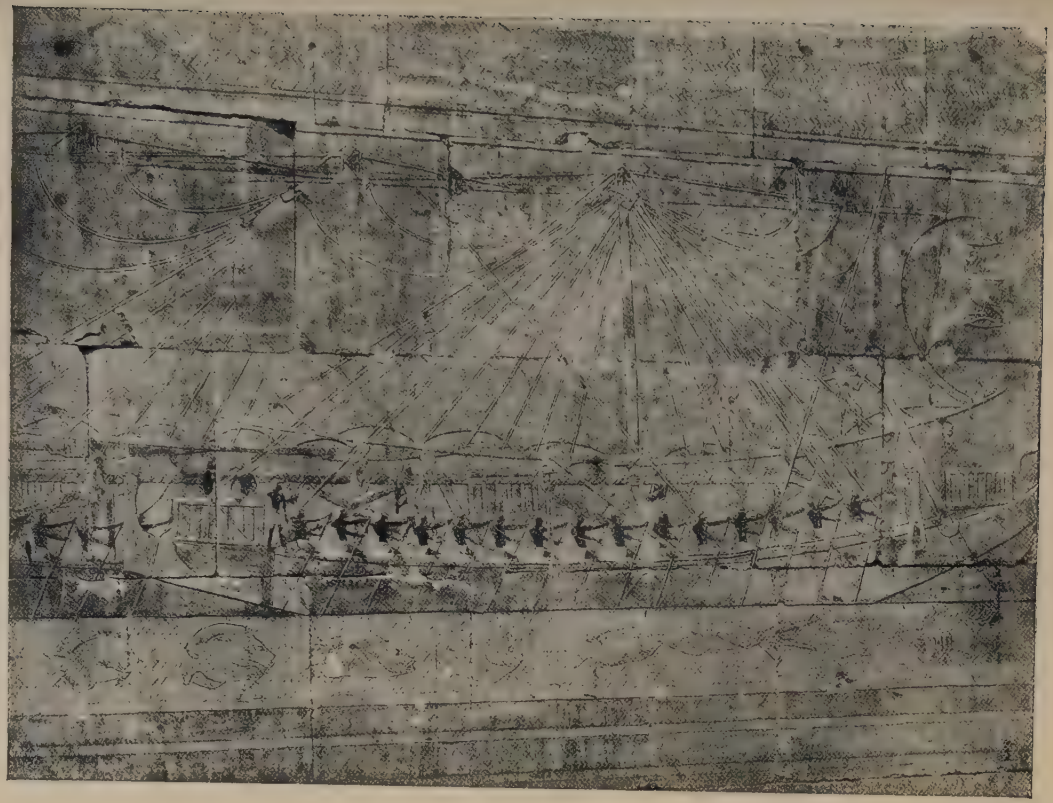
It was welcomed with all honour. Troops were ordered out to form an escort for the treasures of 'God's Land,' and the cargo was borne in solemn procession, and amid great festivities, to the feet of Amen. The incense-trees were safely planted on the terraces of the temple, and the myrrh was measured out by bushels from the great heaps, the gods themselves, according to the naïve representations of the sculptures, presiding at the computation of the quantities. The queen, proud of her success, reminded her nobles of the divine command which had been the origin of the expedition, and said, 'I have made him a Punt in his garden, just as he commanded me. . . . It is large enough for him to walk abroad in it.' Finally, the story of the voyage was recorded at large on the walls of the temple, where it is still to be seen, in the shape of a series of the finest reliefs which we owe to Egyptian art. The incidents of the voyage and the bartering are portrayed with the most remarkable realism, and with such close attention to details as to make it evident that the fleet must have been accompanied by a skilled artist. The racial characteristics of the Egyptians and the Puntites are plainly to be distinguished; even the species of fish, which, according to Egyptian art custom, are to be seen through the transparent water, can be identified. Indeed,

the reliefs of Deir-el-Bahri are not only of the highest artistic value: they are documents of great value for the study of the races, the trade, and the navigation of that distant period.

The taste which inspired Queen Hatshepsut to this voyage was apparently characteristic of her, for in her inscription at Speos Artemidos she states: 'My spirits inclined toward foreign people . . . the people Roshau and Iuu did not hide themselves from me.' It is in this inscription, also, that, as already noted, she gives her contribution to the history of the Hyksôs period.

As the time for her jubilee festival approached, Hatshepsut made preparations for celebrating it by the erection of two great obelisks in the temple at Karnak. The task of bringing down from Aswan the two enormous blocks of granite was entrusted to her great favourite, Senmut, altogether the most remarkable man of the reign—a kind of Admirable Crichton, who was tutor to the Queen's daughter, architect and clerk of works for all the great temples, Lord Privy Seal, and Lord Chancellor of the realm; a self-made man to boot, for he states that his ancestors 'were not found in writing,' yet not ashamed of his humble parentage, for his father and mother are named upon his funeral stele, and represented there embracing their great son. Senmut carried out to admiration the difficult task now entrusted to him. One of the obelisks which he set up has fallen, and lies broken and almost unnoticed among the ruins of Karnak; the other still stands, overtopping the older shaft set up by Tahutmes I., and commanding admiration alike by its graceful proportions and its splendidly cut hieroglyphics. In a long inscription round its base Hatshepsut has told us of the feelings which prompted its erection, and has given us some most interesting details of the work upon it.

The obelisks have been set up, she tells us, 'as a



RELIEF FROM TEMPLE OF DEIR-EL-BAHRI : SHIPS OF HATSHEPSUT'S FLEET.

monument to my father, Amen, lord of the thrones of the two lands, dwelling in Thebes . . . two great obelisks of hard granite of the South; the point of each is of electrum [gold-silver alloy], the tribute of the best quality of all countries. . . . I have done this from a heart full of love for my divine father, Amen. . . . . I was sitting in the palace, I was thinking of my creator, when my heart urged me to make for him two obelisks of electrum whose points reach unto the sky, in the noble hall of columns which is between the two great pylons of the king Aa-kheper-ka-ra. . . . O, ye who see my monument in the course of years, and converse of what I have done, beware of saying, "I know not, I know not, why these things were done." . . . Verily, the two great obelisks that my Majesty has wrought with electrum, they are for my father Amen, to the end that my name should remain established in this temple for ever and ever. They are of a single stone of hard granite without any joining or division in them. My Majesty commanded to work for them in the fifteenth year, the first day of Mekhir, till the sixteenth year and the last day of Mesori, making seven months since the ordering of it in the quarry'* (Plate VIII.). In the naïve self-consciousness of this inscription there is something which marks it out from the stilted phrasing of the innumerable royal lists of offerings to the gods. One seems to catch a far-off echo of something not unlike piety across all these centuries, and to feel that Hatshepsut has become a little more than a mere name to us—something of a living and breathing human being. The amazing feature of the inscription is the period of seven months assigned for the erection of the obelisks. It is little short of marvellous that two such blocks, 97½ feet in height, weighing, perhaps, over 300 tons apiece, should have been quarried, brought down the Nile from Aswan to

* For the whole inscription see 'Records of the Past,' xii. 131.

Thebes, set up, and carved and polished in such a time. 'Nothing,' says Petrie, 'impresses us more with the magnificent organization of the Egyptians than this power of launching hundreds of highly trained workmen on a single scheme in perfect co-ordination. It is no question of a tyranny of brute force and mere numbers; but, on the contrary, a brilliant organization and foresight dealing with a carefully prepared staff.'*

The situation chosen by Hatshepsut for her obelisks seems to us somewhat extraordinary. They were set up in the hall of columns which her father had reared between his two pylons, where they must have necessitated the breaking of the roof, as they towered far above it. How Senmut accommodated his marvellous works to the architectural features of the older structure it is rather difficult to see.

After a reign of peace, distinguished by such enterprises as have been narrated, the great queen died at the age of about fifty-nine. Apart from her greatness as a ruler, she leaves, perhaps, more of a genuinely human impression upon the mind than does any other Egyptian sovereign, saving only Akhenaten. The inscription quoted above is not alone in conveying the feeling that we are dealing with a real woman; she was woman-like, also, in her curiosity about foreign peoples, and in much smaller matters, such as her fondness for animals. On the stele of Senmut we read of the queen's pet cattle, each distinguished by its own name, and one of them marked out for eminence as 'her great favourite, the red.'

Her reputation underwent a sudden eclipse upon her death. What may have occasioned the extraordinary aversion in which Tahutmes III. held her it is, of course, impossible, at this distance, to see. Perhaps the ambitious young king, conscious of his own powers, felt, with a rankling sense of injustice, that his co-regent was arrogating to

* The great obelisk, however, failed to come down square on its pedestal, and still stands somewhat askew.

1. HATSHEPSUT'S OBELISKS, KARNAK.

2. PYRAMIDION OF OBELISK : AMEN BLESSING HATSHEPSUT.

herself all that glory in which he was so well fitted to share; perhaps he saw the dangers which her pacific policy was bringing upon the land; perhaps there was some deeper reason which we do not know. What we do know is that after her death every attempt was made to obliterate her name, and to remove all traces of her greatness from her buildings in Egypt. Her cartouches and her figure were hacked from the walls of her own temple wherever this was possible without sacrilege; around the bases of her obelisks her successor built a sheathing of masonry to hide her inscriptions; the titles and names of her chief servants and favourites were chiselled away from their statues and from their tomb-steles. It seems a petty vengeance for a great man to have taken upon the memory of a great woman; but we do not know enough of the circumstances to pass judgment upon it. Fortunately, as vengeance, it has missed its aim. The greatness of Hatshepsut can still be traced in the scenes from which Tahutmes sought to obliterate her name; and the sheathing with which he cased the lower part of her obelisk may have helped to preserve the very inscription which it was meant to hide for ever.

(Professor Breasted, the author of the latest important History of Egypt, reconstructs what he calls 'The Feud of the Thutmosids' in a somewhat different, somewhat more dramatic, and certainly more complicated fashion. His view as to the relationships of the three Tahutmes and Hatshepsut is in outline as follows. In the uncertainty as to the paternity of Tahutmes III., he reckons him as a son of Tahutmes I., and thus, equally with Tahutmes II., a half-brother, instead of a nephew, of Hatshepsut. The old king, Tahutmes I., is forced by the legitimist party in the State to associate Hatshepsut, who is subsequently married, not to Tahutmes II., but to Tahutmes III. Tahutmes III., having no prospects, is placed as a priest in the temple of Amen at Karnak, but, by means of a *coup d'état* carried out

with the help of the priesthood, is proclaimed king in place of Tahutmes I., who is retired, but allowed to live. The legitimist party, however, gradually force Tahutmes III. to recognize the rights of his wife Hatshepsut, and to give her a share in the government. This once attained, she eventually thrusts her husband into the background, and assumes supreme authority herself. But at this point the other child of the old king, Tahutmes II., appears upon the scene, allies himself with his dethroned father, Tahutmes I., thrusts aside both his brother and sister, and seizes the crown. Tahutmes II., in concert with his father, then begins the persecution of the name of Hatshepsut. Before long, the death of Tahutmes I. so weakens the position of Tahutmes II. that he makes common cause with Tahutmes III., and the two have a short co-regency, which is closed by the death of Tahutmes II. The throne is thus held again by Tahutmes III.; but once more the legitimist party forces on him the recognition of Hatshepsut as co-regent; and, as before, once recognized, she proves strong enough to relegate Tahutmes III. to obscurity, and assumes the leading rôle in the State. Finally, Hatshepsut dies, leaving Tahutmes III., as the sole survivor of this amazing welter, to reign alone.) If this reconstruction, which, as Professor Breasted remarks, 'is not without its difficulties,' be a true representation of the history of the time, the game of politics in the land of Egypt round about 1500 B.C. must have had exciting moments, and statesmen must have been possessed of an agility compared with which the facile evolutions of the Vicar of Bray were sluggish.

It has to be noticed that in the temple at Serabit-el-Khadem, where there are inscriptions of Hatshepsut from the fifth to the twenty-second year of her reign, she and Tahutmes III. are always named in unison. In one case one cartouche of Hatshepsut is put together with one of Tahutmes to express their joint rule—'Nesut-bit Maat-

ka-ra [Hatshepsut], Sa-ra Tahutimes.' 'There is,' says Petrie, 'not a single erasure of the name of either ruler, and no trace of that alternation of power which has been erroneously supposed.' In the absence of conclusive evidence, the simpler arrangement of the history has been followed in the preceding pages, in preference to the ingenious reconstruction of Breasted. For an almost more complicated version of the 'Thutmosid,' or 'Tuthmôsid' succession, Chapter XVIII. may be consulted.)

## CHAPTER VII

### TAHUTMES III. AND THE CONQUEST OF SYRIA

THE pacific policy of Hatshepsut had no doubt been of great value to the land of Egypt itself; but it had not impressed the Syrian principalities which had so lately come under the yoke of the Empire. The fact that Egyptian troops had not been seen in Syria for more than twenty years no doubt encouraged them in hopes of throwing off the suzerainty of the great southern power and reasserting their independence. So long as the great queen remained on the throne, no overt acts of hostility to the sovereign power were committed; the tribute came in uninterruptedly, and the queen was able to describe herself as 'having the Asiatics in her grasp'; but there can be no doubt that the chiefs of the various principalities had been silently maturing their plans, and were only waiting to carry them into execution till the troubled hour when the sceptre of Egypt should be passing from one ruler to another.

The conspiracy against the Egyptian power apparently found its head in the King of Qedesh, on the Orontes, who had succeeded in quietly gathering around him a formidable coalition of States, ready for the moment when the signal of revolt should be given. Accordingly, Queen Hatshepsut can scarcely have been laid in her grave before the whole of Northern Syria went up in a flame of insurrection.

'Beginning from Yeruza, as far as the ends of the country they rebelled against His Majesty.' If the Syrian tribes imagined that they had chosen a favourable moment to strike for freedom, they were destined to be bitterly disappointed. It was Egypt's hour, and the rebellious dynasts had simply delivered themselves into the hands of the one supremely great soldier whom Egypt has ever bred. In campaign after campaign, carried on from the twenty-third to the forty-second year of his reign (reckoning from his association with Hatshepsut), he harried and drove them relentlessly, until at last he had thoroughly beaten the spirit out of them, and the whole land, from the Negeb to the Euphrates, lay submissive and exhausted at his feet.

Peaceful as Hatshepsut's reign had been, it is evident that the army had not been allowed to become inefficient; otherwise Tahutmes could never have accomplished what he did with it within a few months of his accession. War-hardened, of course, it was not; but it must have been well drilled and disciplined, and accustomed to manœuvres and to marching. When the news of the revolt in Syria reached the king's ears, he got his troops on foot at once, and towards the end of the twenty-second year of his reign he marched out from *Z*aru, the frontier fortress of the land. What force he had with him is not stated, but probably, judging from the size of the armies in the wars of Ramses II., it would be somewhere about 20,000 men. Nine days after leaving *Z*aru he was at Gaza, a distance of about 160 miles—which gives a rate of marching sufficient in itself to show that the army must have been in good condition. The day he arrived at Gaza was the anniversary of his coronation. The fact is merely mentioned in the Annals; Tahutmes had other things to think of than the celebration of anniversaries.

Resting one day at Gaza, he marched northward again next day. As he drew nearer to the enemy's position, his

advance was less hurried, and he took ten days from Gaza to Carmel—about ninety miles. Arriving at Yehem (perhaps Yamnia), on the southern side of the Carmel ridge, he halted his army for a couple of days, called a council of war, and made known to his officers what he had learned about the enemy's dispositions. While Tahutmes was marching northwards, the King of Qedesh and his allies had pushed south, and had now occupied a position near to the fortress of Megiddo, which held a commanding situation on the northern slope of the Carmel range, in the Plain of Esdraelon, about sixteen miles from where the Egyptian army was now halted. The problem before Tahutmes and his council of war was how best to pass the rough ridge of Carmel in the face of a strongly posted and expectant enemy, and to bring him to battle. There was a choice of roads. A narrow pass led straight through the hill-country on Megiddo; an easier but more circuitous route led round by Taanach, on the south side of Megiddo; while a third road took the most northerly direction by Zefta, and emerged from the hills on the north of the enemy's position.

When Tahutmes consulted his officers, their advice was strongly in favour of taking one or other of the more circuitous routes. Their counsel may best be given in the quaint language of the Annals. 'They said in reply to His Majesty: "What is it like that we should march on this road [the direct pass], which becomes a narrow pass? Men have come saying that the enemy are waiting to attack where there is no passage for a numerous host; does not one horse have to follow behind its fellow, and man behind man likewise? Ought our vanguard to be engaged while our rearguard is waiting in Aaruna without fighting? Now there are two roads: one road, behold, it will lead us to Taanaka; the other, behold, it leads to the north side of Zefta, and we should come out at the north of Maketa.

Let, then, our mighty lord march on one of those two ways, whichever his heart chooseth; but let us not go on that difficult road."'

The advice of the officers was apparently sound; but it suited ill with the impetuous and daring spirit of their master, who had, moreover, a good reason for deciding upon the direct and more difficult road. By taking it he would run the very considerable risk of being attacked in detail where his regiments had no room to deploy; but there was also to be considered the probability that the enemy would expect attack by one of the easier roads, and that an advance direct on Megiddo might take him unawares. Moreover, the proud spirit of Tahutmes could not endure the thought that his enemy should imagine that he had hesitated to advance direct upon him. He answered his officers with some heat. 'As I live, as I am the beloved of Ra, praised by my father Amen, as my nostrils are refreshed with life and strength, I will go on this road of Aaruna; let him of you who will go on the roads ye name; and let him of you who will follow My Majesty. For they —namely the enemy, abominated of Ra—consider thus, "Has His Majesty gone on another road? Then he fears us," thus do they consider.'*

Thus adjured, the officers submitted to the king's decision. 'Behold, we follow Thy Majesty whithersoever Thy Majesty goes, even as servants follow their master.' The army immediately entered the pass of Aaruna, the king himself commanding the vanguard. Resting a night at Aaruna, he pushed on through the pass the next morning, and shortly found himself in touch with the advanced squadrons of the allied army. At the point where the first encounter took place there was a valley of sufficient breadth to allow of manœuvring; and here the vanguard held the enemy in check until the rear of the

* For the Annals of Tahutmes see Petrie, ii. 103 *et seq.*

Egyptian army came up from Aaruna. The Syrians were not in sufficient force to dispute the passage seriously, and by midday the van of the host had debouched on the plain south of Megiddo. An hour later the king halted on the banks of the brook Qina before the town. (The whole incident forcibly recalls Napoleon's passage of the defile of Geluhausen in face of the Austro-Bavarian army under General Wrede, immediately before the Battle of Hanau.)

The king's boldness had thus been justified by the event. The Syrians had been expecting him to come by the Taanach road, and had a wing of their force touching that point, so that, apparently, Tahutmes had only had to deal with some detachments from their extreme northern wing. They had thus lost the opportunity of taking his regiments in detail as they deployed on the plain, and the advantage had passed from them to the Egyptians, who could now choose time and ground. The Syrian army seemingly now drew in to cover Megiddo, and Tahutmes, certain that his enemy could not avoid a battle, rested his troops for a night, having first issued an order for the army to be ready to attack early the next day. 'The sentinels of the army were spread abroad; they said, "Firm of heart, firm of heart, watchful of head, watchful of head," waking in life at the tent of the king. Came one to report to His Majesty, "The country is safe, and the army south and north likewise."'

Early the next morning the Egyptian army was on the move to take up its positions. The king himself, resplendent in his chariot of electrum, ordered the disposition of the troops; and here, first in history, we have some evidence of tactical skill being exercised. Tahutmes did not merely form his line of battle and hurl it straight upon his enemy. Instead, he swung his front round westwards, so that only his extreme right wing rested upon the brook Qina, a tributary of the Kishon, where his camp

had been. His centre was west of Megiddo, and his left wing stretched round to the north-west of the town towards the *Zefta* road. This wing thus threatened the Asiatic line of retreat to the north, while it secured an easy retreat by the *Zefta* road for his own army, should things go adversely. It was probably to the confidence which he displayed in thus thrusting his left wing so far northward that he owed the unexpected ease of his victory. The threat of being surrounded has often shaken even highly disciplined troops, and no doubt in this case it had its own influence upon the fortunes of the battle. The Syrian army broke and fled at the first charge; and one can only explain such a collapse on the part of a force which must have deemed itself fully equal to the Egyptian army by the supposition that the nerves of the allies were shaken by the bold movement with which Tahutmes threatened to cut them off from their line of retreat.

The broken troops, whose loss had been trifling, amounting only to eighty-three killed, fled to the shelter of the walls of Megiddo, the garrison of which promptly shut the gates, lest the Egyptians should enter along with the fugitives. 'When they saw His Majesty prevailing over them, they fled headlong toward Maketa, as if terrified by spirits; they left their horses, and their chariots of silver and of gold, and were drawn up by hauling them by their clothes into this city, for the men shut the gates of this city upon them, and let down clothes to haul them up to this city.' The opportunity of crushing the whole revolt in a single day lay for a little before the victorious Egyptian army, had the pursuit been hotly pressed; and no doubt this had been part of the plan of Tahutmes when he threw his left wing so confidently around the north-west of Megiddo. But the golden opportunity was lost. 'Then, had but the troops of His Majesty not given their hearts to spoiling the things of

the enemy, they would have taken Maketa at that moment.' But the sight of so much precious plunder was too much for the discipline of the conquering army. 'The great army of His Majesty drew round to count their spoil. . . . The whole army rejoiced, giving praise to Amen for the victory that he had given to his son, and they glorified His Majesty, exalting his victories. They brought the spoil which they had taken, of hands, of living captives, of horses, of chariots of gold and of silver.' But Tahutmes was in no mood to listen to his army 'exalting his victories' and giving praise to Amen. He was furious at the missing of a chance which might have saved him many battles. 'Had ye afterwards captured this city,' he said sternly to his men, as they came before him flushed with victory, 'behold, I would have given a rich offering to Ra this day; because every chief of every country that has revolted is within it, and because it is the capture of a thousand cities, this capture of Megiddo.'

Having missed his opportunity, he had to be content to invest the city in due form. The army sat down before the walls, and, according to ancient siege-practice, surrounded them with an enclosing wall which was named 'Men-kheper-ra [Tahutmes III.] is the encloser of the Sati' [Asiatics]. 'Now all that His Majesty did against this city, and against the vile enemy and his vile troops, was written from day to day under its date, under the title of "Travels" . . . and placed on a roll of leather in the temple of Amen to this day.' Unfortunately, this earliest of all siege diaries has perished, and we have only the scanty notes of the inscribed Annals. Megiddo was not long in feeling the pinch of hunger. The corn had not been harvested, and while the Egyptian army cut the standing crops for its own use, the townsmen were in misery. Finally, capitulation was forced upon them. 'Then the chiefs of this land came, with them that per-

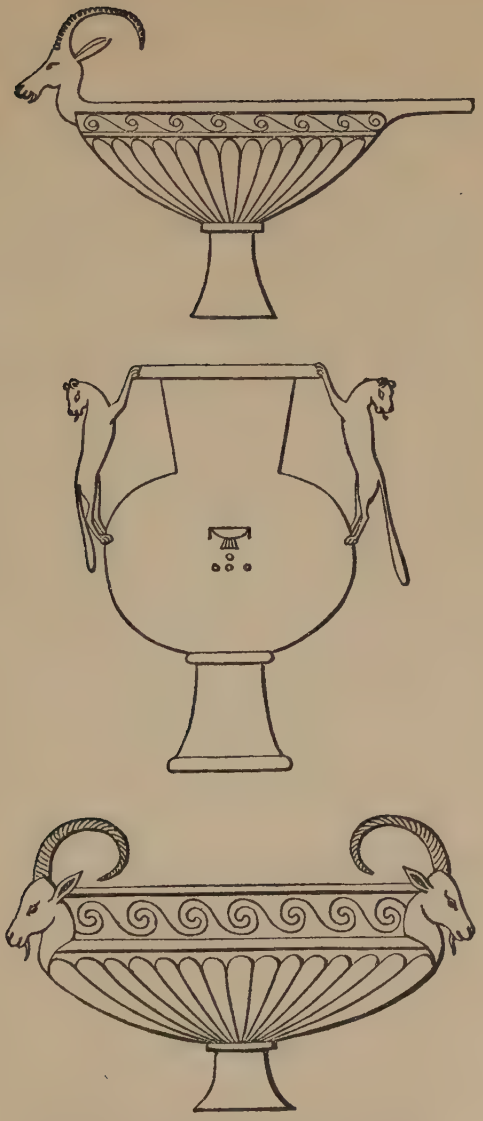


FIG. 16.—VASES—ASIATIC TRIBUTE.

tained to them, to smell the ground to the spirits of His Majesty, asking breath for their nostrils of the greatness of his power.' Tahutmes was, perhaps, as great a soldier, though that was never tested, as any of the Assyrian or Babylonian conquerors; but he was not a butcher, as they were. Accordingly, his treatment of the conquered allies was extremely lenient, for the time. He deposed the rebel chiefs, and appointed new chiefs in their stead; but there were no executions. Sargon or Ashurbanipal would have made Megiddo a shambles.

The spoil of the victory was considerable: 340 Syrians had been captured, and more than 2,000 mares, together with chariots and suits of armour by the hundred. But the most valuable part of the plunder was that which came from Megiddo and other towns in the neighbourhood, which now submitted to the conqueror. Gold and silver, lapis lazuli and malachite, poured in upon the Egyptian camp. The whole household furniture of the King of Qedesh was among the spoil, including, among other things, a silver statue of his god, a statue of himself in ebony and gold, his sceptre, his drinking-vessels in gold and silver, and his chairs and footstools. His family was also captured, but he himself, the great prize of the campaign and the head of the rebellion, was not secured, but managed in some way to escape.

Having secured the peace of the conquered country, so far as possible, by replacing the rebel chiefs with others who were more favourably disposed toward Egypt, Tahutmes prepared to march south. Before leaving the neighbourhood of Megiddo, he gathered in the remains of the crop, amounting to 150,000 bushels, which had not already been used by his army during the siege. For more reasons than one that would be a lean winter in Megiddo. On its homeward march the victorious army carried with it at least 360 pounds' weight of gold, and 200 pounds' weight of

silver, then scarcer and more valuable than gold, besides an enormous amount of other precious plunder. But infinitely more important than the spoils were the captives. From this campaign alone Tahutmes carried into Egypt 2,503 men, women, and children. We shall see the same process being repeated again and again, until at least 8,000 people of Semitic stock, the flower of the race, had been thus transported into Egypt. Tahutmes had brought to bear upon his country an influence whose ultimate results neither he nor anyone else could have foreseen. It was the great conqueror of the Semites who first set on foot, on a large scale, the process which in a few generations led to the Semitizing of Egypt, to religious and political revolution, and to the overthrow of the Empire.

Thus the first campaign of Tahutmes had been crowned with complete success. At very trifling cost of life he had broken the power of the coalition which had been formed against Egypt, and had taught the Syrians that the new ruler of the land had an arm as long and as strong as that of their first conqueror; while, on merely material grounds, the spoils which he had brought home with him must have been of enormous value. His triumph was therefore celebrated with extraordinary splendour in three great feasts, which were made to coincide with three of the festivals of Amen-Ra, the Lord of Thebes, who had granted such victories to his son. But the blessings bestowed by Amen were also acknowledged in more substantial fashion. His temple was endowed with three of the towns which Tahutmes had captured, Anaugasa, Yenoam, and Hurankaru, these towns being compelled to furnish a yearly contribution for the upkeep of the service of the god. In addition, ample provision was made of offerings in kind—of oxen, geese, incense, wine, and fruit; a great crowd of captives was assigned to the service of the temple as doorkeepers, and a considerable extent of

cultivated land in Egypt itself was madè over as a heritage to the divine master of Thebes. From this time Amen begins to take rank as one of the great landed proprietors in the Empire, and the example of Tahutmes was followed by his successors until the diversion of the nation's wealth to the service of the god assumed the proportions of a national disaster, and the priests of Amen were enabled to rival, and at last to supersede, the reigning house.

FIG. 17.—CHARIOT OF THE SYRIANS.

The task of bringing the Asiatic empire into full subjection was, however, far from being completed, as the king very well knew; and 'the return of the year, when kings go out to battle,' found Tahutmes again on the march through the countries which he had conquered a few months before. On this occasion, so far as appears, there was no fighting, or at least none of sufficient importance to call for record. The king merely made a fresh demonstration of the warlike power of Egypt as a

reminder to his new subjects that their safest policy was to remain peaceably under the yoke, and the chiefs who had so lately felt his heavy hand were not disposed to risk a second chastisement. Tribute, in the shape of gold and silver, chiefly wrought, cattle and costly woods, and slaves of both sexes, among whom the daughter of a chief is specially mentioned, poured in upon him, 'to every place which His Majesty visited, and where his tent was set up. But the expedition of this year is rendered notable by one circumstance. The Annals record the 'tribute of the chief* of Assuru,' which consisted chiefly of lapis lazuli. The word 'tribute' is, of course, not to be interpreted literally in this case, for the Empire of Tahutmes, at its greatest, never extended to Assyria proper. But no doubt the king of the great northern kingdom had been impressed by the news of the victory at Megiddo the year before, and was anxious to be on good terms with the master of this new force which had begun to make itself felt. Thus there met, for the first time, the two giant powers which for so long dominated the ancient world, and whose rivalry was destined to have such an influence upon the course of history.

The third campaign was also uneventful, save for the fact that Tahutmes, who seems to have had some of Hatshepsut's taste for the acclimatization of foreign plants and trees, brought back with him a number of plants and shrubs, the sculptured representations of which still remain upon the walls of the chambers which he added to the temple of Amen at Karnak. Neither in this nor in the fourth campaign, of which we have unfortunately no record, does there appear to have been any serious fighting. But the fifth campaign, in the king's twenty-ninth year, witnessed a new departure. Tahutmes appears to have realized the waste of energy involved in the long and arduous march through Palestine, and

* Probably Puzur-Ashur IV.

to have felt that as he advanced further into the land, as he was bound to do if he wished to overthrow Qedesh, he was continually increasing the risk of disaster. Accordingly, he resolved on this occasion to seize a base on the coast, and to operate from it against the towns in the interior. He had already organized a fleet, and Breasted suggests that he now used it to transport his army to Northern Phœnicia. At all events, we find him besieging a town, only a fragment of whose name survives, but which evidently lay on the coast, as ships were seized on its capture, and which also must have been in Northern Phœnicia, as the town of Tunip sent a contingent to help in its defence, and Tahutmes subsequently marched south from it upon Arvad. The capture of this unknown town afforded a considerable spoil, and after the sack Tahutmes proceeded southwards along the coast, subjugating the country as he went. Arvad was roughly handled, its corn harvested, and its fruit-trees cut down. Moving along the Phœnician coast, the Egyptian soldiers found that they had come upon a land of plenty. Not only did the wealthy Phœnician cities yield rich loot, but the fruitfulness of the land itself evidently impressed the Egyptians, accustomed as they were to fertility. It was autumn, and the troops revelled in the abundance around them. 'Behold, His Majesty found the land of Zahi throughout, its orchards full of their fruit. There were found their wines abundant in their winepresses, as water flows down; their corn was on the threshing-floors . . . more abundant than the sand of the shores. The army was satiated with their shares.' In the face of such temptations, not even Tahutmes, stern soldier though he was, was able to maintain discipline. It was, perhaps, fortunate for his military reputation that there was no further fighting to be done in the meantime, for, as the chronicler quaintly puts it, 'the soldiers of His Majesty were drunk

and anointed with *beq* oil every day, as in the festivals in Egypt.'

It would serve no purpose to detail the story of each individual campaign, with its monotonous record of spoliation. In the sixth expedition Qedesh at last fell to the Egyptian arms, and Arvad, which had not yet sufficiently learned its lesson, and had revolted during the siege of Qedesh, was again rudely schooled. Occasionally the prosaic record breaks into a sentence which gives a glimpse of the stern realities of that ancient warfare, as when, at the capture of 'the city Anrathu, which is on the bank of the water Neserna,' we read: 'Behold, His Majesty spoiled this town in a short hour, with swiftness of spoiling.' Evidently the soldiers of Tahutmes, like Napoleon's 'old grumblers,' were becoming experts in their grim trade. The southern frontier was not being neglected while the great king was warring in the north, for in this year we read that on the return of Tahutmes to the Delta, he was met by the ambassador of Punt with a tribute of incense and gums, while the Nubian barges came down the Nile with the tribute of the Wawat and the other negro tribes.

It was not till two years after this last campaign that Tahutmes marched north again. This time his advance was upon new ground, which had not been trodden since the memorable expedition of Tahutmes I. After several slight actions, he entered upon the land of Naharina or Mesopotamia, where he had to face new enemies. And here, according to the inscription of his general Amen-em-heb, which now begins to give us some details of interest, he must have fought a battle of some importance in which the troops of the King of Aleppo were engaged against him. Amen-em-heb says: 'Again I took spoil in this expedition in the high land of Wan, on the west of Khalubu (Aleppo). I brought Amu, living prisoners,

thirteen persons . . . thirteen bronze weapons, and . . . bronze weapons inlaid with gold.' The richness of the weapons indicates that some *corps d'élite* had been opposed to the Egyptians, probably the bodyguard of the King of Aleppo. Pushing further eastwards, Tahutmes met with fresh opposition from 'that enemy of the vile Naharina'—in other words, the King of Mitanni—which powerful State was at this time the rival of the growing power of Assyria in Western Mesopotamia. The Mitannian forces had, however, no better fortune than the other enemies who had essayed to check the triumphal progress of the Egyptian conqueror. 'His Majesty went north, taking the towns and overturning the camps of that enemy of the vile Naharina . . . he pursued after them . . . without anyone daring to look behind him, but they bounded along like a herd of gazelles.' In this action, which must have taken place near to the town of Carchemish, Amen-em-heb again distinguished himself. The pursuit appears to have been pressed across the Euphrates, for Amen-em-heb relates that he 'crossed the water of Naharina' with his prisoners to bring them before the king. Tahutmes now crossed the river in person, and on his return set up his stele of victory by the side of that of Tahutmes I. Turning south, he followed the course of the river to the city of Niy, which appears to have been situated somewhere near the great bend where the Euphrates turns eastward away from the Mediterranean. This town having either surrendered or been captured without serious fighting, Tahutmes apparently considered that his work in Naharina was accomplished for the time. Accordingly he devoted some time to big-game hunting. The country in the neighbourhood of Niy abounded in elephants, and the great hunt resulted in the slaughter of 120 tuskers. The hunt did not end without personal danger to the king. The largest of the elephants turned upon him, and his position was

COLOSSAL HEAD OF TAHUTMES III.

*In the British Museum*

apparently critical when the trusty Amen-em-heb interposed. He cut off the trunk of the king's assailant, and eluded the charge of the infuriated monster by rushing between two rocks into the river.

While the king was thus engaged in manly sports on a scale which helps to explain the extinction of the greater quadrupeds in this region, the customary presents from the neighbouring tribes were coming in, all to be duly recorded as 'tribute.' Among them we read: 'The tribute of the great Kheta in this year was: silver rings 8, weighing 301 *deben* (60 lbs.), white precious stones, one great block *zagu* wood.' This is the first appearance of the Hittite nation or confederacy, which in the following dynasty was to contend with Sety and Ramses II. upon equal terms for the sovereignty of Syria. Evidently 'the great Kheta' did not as yet feel themselves equal to the task of opposing Tahutmes, and deemed it wise to 'agree with their adversary,' since they could not fight him. On his return home, the king found that an expedition to Punt had returned with the usual cargo of incense, gold, ivory, and 'all the good things of that land,' while the tribute of the Nubian Wawat had come in with regularity.

Tahutmes had thus accomplished the object upon which he had apparently set his heart. What his grandfather had done merely in a rapid raid he had done in a far more solid and satisfactory manner. He had, not nominally, but in literal truth, advanced the frontier of his kingdom to the River Euphrates, and had given to Egypt an extent of territory which she was destined never really to surpass. His Empire extended from Carchemish and the Amanus Mountains on the north to the fourth cataract at least on the south. He had even crossed the Euphrates, a feat unaccomplished by any of his predecessors; while his reputation had extended as far as the island of Cyprus, whose king, though not actually a vassal of the Egyptian

his return from the campaign of Qedesh 'His Majesty ordered that the victories which he had made, beginning in his twenty-third and continuing to his forty-second year, should be recorded on this tablet on this shrine.'

It is much to be deplored that we have such scanty records of the exploits of one who evidently possessed military genius of the first order. We may conclude that it was largely the fame of the king's warlike exploits, and that tincture of personal daring which breaks out in his speech before the passage of the Carmel ridge, that made the name of Tahutmes the most popular with his own countrymen of any in the long roll of Egyptian sovereigns. His name, Men-kheper-ra, was so frequently placed on amulets and scarabs that Petrie states that 'two scarabs out of any three with names are generally of this king.' The halo of romance encircled not only the soldier-king, but also his famous captains. Among these there is one man who is worthy of more than a local celebrity, as his adventures furnish the prototype of one of the most delightful of stories. This is the general Tahuti, whose dagger is now at Darmstadt, while a magnificent piece of presentation plate belonging to him, and bearing an inscription from his royal master, is in the Louvre. The favourite legend of Tahuti tells how he captured the city of Joppa by means of a clever stratagem in the course of which he first decoyed the Prince of Joppa into his hands by promising to show him the leading staff of Tahutmes, from whom he pretended to have deserted, and then made use of the poor prince's herald to secure the admission to the town of a train of asses laden with huge jars in which he had concealed a number of picked men. The story is, of course, the original source of 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves'; and Tahutmes's favourite captain, who was probably a grim enough old soldier in his time, having thus 'suffered a sea-change' of a sufficiently quaint type,

has contributed more to the gaiety of nations since his death than ever he did while living.

In spite of the constant campaigning, and the preparations for each successive expedition, which in themselves would have been sufficient to absorb all the energies of a less remarkable man, Tahutmes did not neglect the domestic affairs of Egypt. On the contrary, these seem to have been attended to with the same thoroughness of personal supervision and minuteness of preparation which were characteristic of his warlike toils. Probably at no period of its history did the material prosperity of the nation reach a higher pitch. The amount of wealth, both in the precious metals and in kind, which poured into Egypt year by year from the conquered territories must have been very considerable, and, in addition, the Nubian tribute seems to have come in with unusual regularity. Each year we read of the Nubian barges coming down the Nile to Thebes laden 'with all the good products of that country, and the harvest of Wawat likewise.' Foreign trade was beginning to develop to an unprecedented extent; and along the quays of the great cities of Egypt were seen the galleys of the Phœnicians and other peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean, unloading all the products of their lands. Tyre sent the costly fabrics of its looms and dye-works, together with the priceless gold and silver work of its cunning, though unoriginal, workmen. Cyprus and Crete and the Isles of the Ægean were represented by annual contributions of copper, lead, costly stones, and manufactured goods. The spirit of proud isolation, which for so long had made the land of the Nile Valley sufficient to itself, had departed, never to return. The wars of Tahutmes had opened the door for the entrance of the products of other civilizations totally different in character from that of the Egyptians, but quite equal to it; and the native Egyptian was not slow to avail himself of all the

new resources of luxury which were thus put at his disposal. The warriors of Syria might not be a match in the field for the veterans of Tahutmes, but their brilliant coats of mail, their chariots, plated with gold and silver, their inlaid bronze bucklers and spears, were refinements of equipment far beyond anything of which their conquerors had dreamed. Henceforward the Egyptians must have realized that they had much to learn as well as to teach, and they set themselves to the task with avidity and thoroughness.

We have already alluded to the important influence exercised upon the nation by the steady influx of Semitic prisoners; and it is specially to be noted that, among these, the skilled craftsmen of the various conquered peoples appear to have been particularly sought out and prized. These brought their trades with them to the land of their captivity, and taught them to their new masters; and from this time there takes rise a new standard of taste in the arts and crafts, more soft and delicate, and more adapted to the expression and gratification of the emotions, than the somewhat stern and repressed style of the past. The change was thoroughgoing, and extended to the very smallest articles of use and adornment. Types and fashions which had remained practically unchanged for centuries were now superseded, and the traditions of the fathers became more and more obsolete. As an illustration of the profound change which was now passing over the nation by the development of new tastes and the introduction of new luxuries, Professor Petrie has noted the fact that the whole economic condition of the land appears to have been modified by the diversion of a large section of its populace to unremunerative work. This is shown by the fact that throughout the annals of this period Egypt appears, for the only time in her history, as a grain-importing country. Year by year

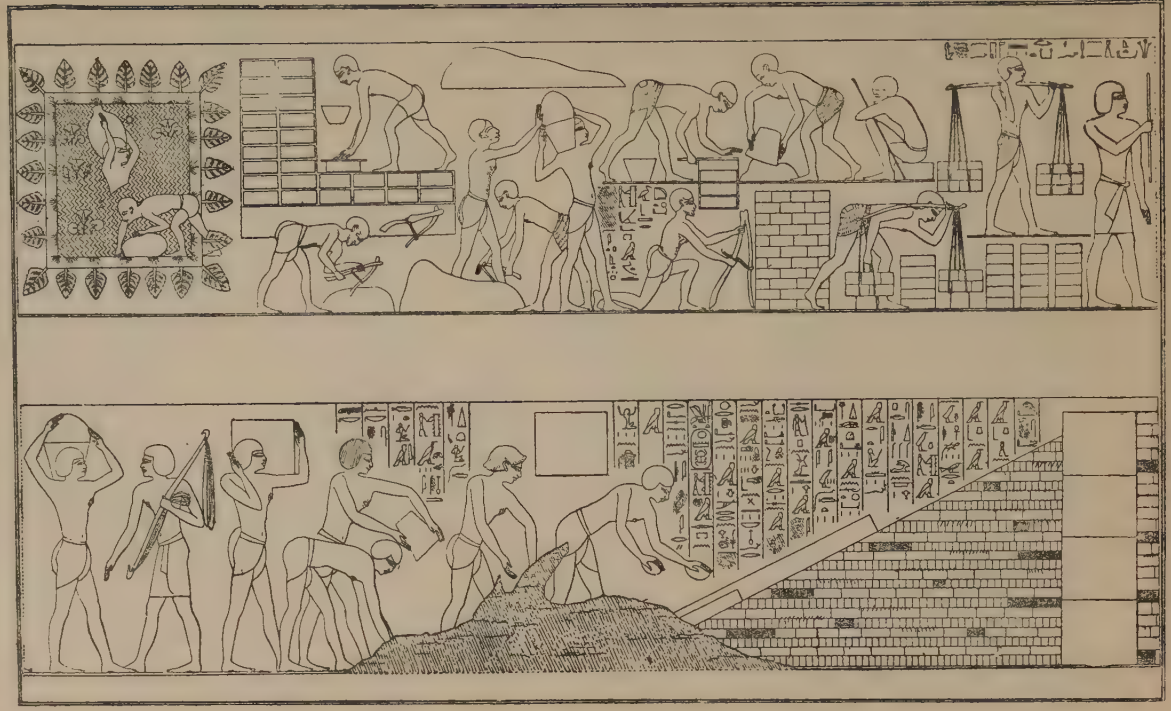
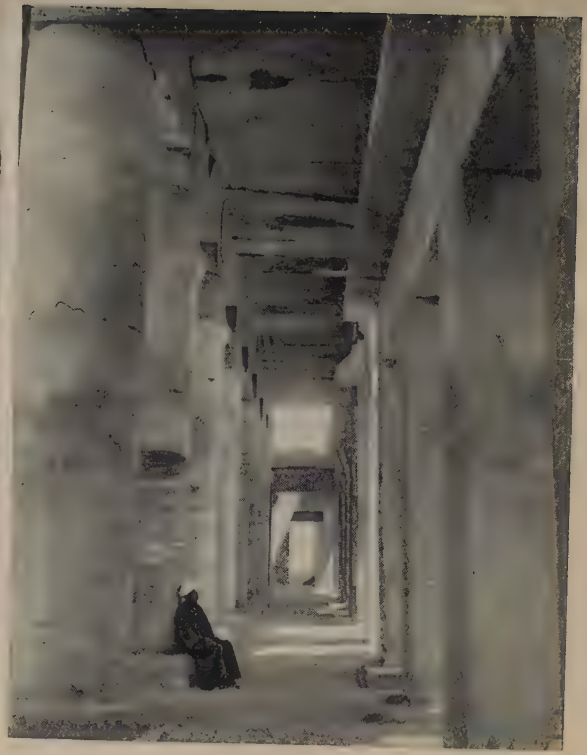


FIG. 18.—FOREIGN CAPTIVES MAKING BRICKS AND BUILDING.

a large part of the Syrian harvest was carried south by the retiring army; year by year Nubia sends in a portion of its tribute in the form of grain. This development is characteristic of the Eighteenth Dynasty only, and is highly significant of a time when conquest had opened the door to luxury. It may be questioned whether the influence of the conquests of Tahutmes was not thus for harm, rather than for good, in the end. But in the meantime there can be no doubt that to the Egyptians themselves the time of the great king's reign must have appeared a veritable golden age, in which all the nations of the earth were coming to lay down their treasures at the feet of the people whom the gods loved.

The mark of the king's hand was plainly to be seen all over Egypt. In no previous reign had there been such extraordinary activity in the building of new shrines for the gods, and in the adornment of old ones. From the Delta to the third cataract the temples of Tahutmes arose along the banks of the Nile, many of them buildings of the first class in point of size and beauty, though others, of course, were merely small shrines to local deities. In far-off Sinai, among the sun-scorched rocks of Serabit-el-Khadem, the king added a pylon to the miners' temple, and ôtherwise continued the work of Hatshepsut and of the earlier kings. At Koptos he entirely rebuilt the temple of Min, the god of the gold country. At Deir-el-Bahri he carried on the work of Hatshepsut's terraced temple, though doing his best to efface every vestige of her connection with it; while at Elephantine, Kom Ombo, Edfu, and many other sites throughout the land, his architects and workmen, native and captive, were continually employed (Fig. 18). Nubia, particularly, shows so many traces of his activity as to make it evident that in his later years he was devoting special attention to the southern part of his

1. LOTUS AND PAPYRUS PILLARS OF TAHUTMES III., KARNAK.



2. COLONNADE OF TAHUTMES III., KARNAK. INVERTED CAPITALS.

Empire, as he had done in his earlier days to the northern portion.

His greatest works were, naturally, at Karnak. There he added to the already existing temple a great hall over 130 feet long, with two rows of pillars and two of columns. This hall lay transverse to the axis of the old buildings, and around it there was grouped a number of halls and chambers whose purpose can only be conjectured. Part of the work of Tahutmes at Karnak shows a new departure in style: the capitals of the pillars, instead of spreading out in the ordinary open-flower form, take the form of a bell standing upon its mouth, the architrave being borne by the narrow end. The form is more curious than beautiful, and was never repeated (Plate X.). Some of his work, however, was particularly beautiful, and the two stele pillars, with the lotus and papyrus in relief upon them, are fine alike in design and execution (Plate X.). On the walls of some of his chambers Tahutmes caused to be depicted the rare plants which he had brought back from his Syrian campaigns; while on a pylon which he added to the already numerous gateways of the temple he inscribed lists of the various towns and districts which had submitted to his arms (Plate XI.). The northern list begins with the names of Qedesh and Megiddo, already familiar to us from the story of the great king's wars.

At Thebes also he erected a pair of huge obelisks in celebration of his greatest achievement, the crossing of the Euphrates. These have long since ceased to adorn their original site; but a fragment of one still stands at Constantinople, and bears his record of that great event: '[Tahutmes] who has gone over the Great Bend of Naharina in strength and victory at the head of his troops, making a great slaughter. . . . Men-kheper-ra, Son of the Sun, Lord of Victory, Chastiser of the whole earth, who has set his boundary at the horn of the earth, at the

extremities of Naharina.' The famous obelisk of the Lateran, the largest still remaining entire, is also the work of Tahutmes. It stands 105½ feet in height, and measures 9 feet 9 inches in width at the base, and about 5 feet 10 inches at the top, just below the pyramidion; but it was inferior in size to two other obelisks, of one of which the stone at Constantinople is possibly a fragment, which stood 185 feet in height, and must have weighed at least 800 tons apiece. At Heliopolis, where he also carried out great works, he reared two other enormous monoliths in commemoration of his fourth jubilee; and, of all his works, these are the most interesting to ourselves. They stood at Heliopolis till 12 B.C., when, in the eighteenth year of the Emperor Augustus, they were removed to Alexandria. There they remained, one still erect, the other prostrate, until, in 1877, the fallen one, 68½ feet in height, was removed to London, where it now stands on the Thames Embankment; and two years later its fellow, a foot higher, was carried across the Atlantic to a site in Central Park, New York. Probably few of the thousands to whom these obelisks are familiar as 'Cleopatra's Needles' realize that they are the monuments, not of Cleopatra, but of a monarch with more legitimate titles to fame—the first world conqueror known to history.

In such works the king spent the twelve years which still remained to him after his last campaign had closed. Already, before his death, he was elevated into a hero of romance, and heard himself adored in hymns of praise as only one other (Senusert III.) among all his predecessors had been. In the extant hymn to Tahutmes, it is Amen himself who praises his glorious son.*

* See 'Records of the Past,' ii. 25, and Maspero, 'The Struggle of the Nations,' pp. 268-270.

1. CŌLONNADE OF TAHUTMES III., KARNAK.
2. CONQUESTS OF TAHUTMES III., KARNAK.

'The Speech of Amen-Ra, Lord of the Seats of the Upper and Lower World.

Come to me, rejoice in seeing my perfections, my son, my supporter,
Men-kheper-ra, ever living . . .
My heart dilates at thy happy coming to my temple . . .
I am come that I may grant unto thee to crush the great ones of Zahi,
I throw them under thy feet across their mountains;
I grant to thee that they shall see Thy Majesty as a lord of shining splendour
When thou shinest before them in my likeness! . . .
I am come to grant that thou mayest crush the land of the East,
And invade those who dwell in the provinces of God's Land;
I grant that they may see Thy Majesty as the comet
Which rains down the heat of its flame and sheds its dew. . . .
I am come to grant that thou mayest crush the Libyans,
So that the isles of the Utentiu may be in the power of thy souls;
I grant that they may see Thy Majesty as a wizard lion,
And that thou mayest make corpses of them in the midst of their own valleys. . . .'

Stilted and conventional to a degree as the form of the hymn may be, it yet reveals the impression of power and ceaseless activity and watchfulness which Tahutmes had made upon his contemporaries. The tradition of his swift vengeance lingered long among the Syrians whom he had so mercilessly harried. Four generations later, one of the very cities which he had smitten, now a faithful vassal of the Empire, and in dire distress at the hands of the enemies of Egypt, writes to the king who was allowing all the conquests of his great ancestor to slip from between his fingers: 'Who formerly could have plundered Tunip without being plundered by Manakhbiria?' (Men-kheper-ra). Nor are there wanting signs that he held, or at least desired to hold, his Empire over his subjects by ties stronger than those of mere force. Perhaps it is not merely a form of words in which his Constantinople obelisk describes him as 'swaying through

truth the love of the two lands.' For fifty-four years he had reigned in power such as no monarch in the world had ever approached before him, and not many since him have surpassed.

At last the end came to so much greatness: 'Behold, the king had ended his time of existence of many good years of victory, power, and justification from the first year to the fifty-fourth year. In the thirtieth of Phamenoth of the majesty of the king Men-kheper-ra, deceased, he ascended to heaven and joined the sun's disc; the follower of the god met his maker. When the light dawned and the morrow came, the disc of the sun arose, and heaven became bright. The king Aa-kheperu-ra, son of the sun, Amenhotep . . . was established on the throne of his father.' 'Le roi est mort. Vive le roi!'

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FLOOD-TIDE OF EMPIRE—AMENHOTEP III

SHORTLY before the death of Tahutmes III., he had associated with himself as co-regent his young son Amenhotep II. (1449-1423 B.C.), who was probably just on the verge of manhood. There was thus no break in the succession, and the young monarch, who may have been about eighteen, succeeded quietly to the throne of his mighty father. It was not long, however, before there were signs that his presence was needed in Northern Palestine. The movement there can scarcely be said to have amounted to a rebellion; but at all events some of the tribes were showing signs of restlessness, and in at least one town the residents favourable to the Egyptian suzerainty were in some trouble. The young king showed himself no less prompt than his father had been. Not later than April of his second year he was in Palestine with his army, and fought an engagement, probably of no very great importance, at the town of Shemesh-edom, in Galilee. Whatever may have been the scale of the battle, it at least gave Amenhotep the opportunity of showing that the traditional valour of his house had not degenerated in his person. He fought at the head of his troops, and with his own hand captured eighteen prisoners, besides other plunder.

Advancing further, he crossed a river, possibly the Orontes, and again came in contact with some force of

the enemy; but the affair was evidently only a slight skirmish, probably with the escort of a convoy, though the king himself again fought bravely. Shortly after this skirmish he had another encounter, seemingly of somewhat greater moment, in the land of Takshi, near Aleppo, in which with his own mace he struck down and captured seven of the chiefs who were opposed to him. These men were reserved, as we shall see, for a fate whose savagery is not at all in accordance with the usual traditions of Egyptian warfare. Pressing onwards, and encountering no further opposition, he arrived at the city of Niy, whose inhabitants, whatever their real feelings may have been, deemed it politic to open their gates and receive their overlord with professions of loyalty. 'His Majesty went in peace this day to the town of Niy; behold the Satiu of this town, men and women, were on the walls to adore His Majesty.' Leaving Niy, he found it necessary to visit a town called Akathi, where the Egyptian residents or sympathizers had been in danger from the rebellious section of the populace. While he was in Naharina, there was the usual procession of chiefs anxious to curry favour with the Great King. 'The chiefs of Mitanni came to him, their tribute upon their backs, to beseech His Majesty that there may be given to them his sweet breath of life; a mighty occurrence, it has never been heard since the time of the gods.' The latter part of the sentence suggests that the art of flattery was not unknown to the courtiers of the Egyptian Empire; for, after the solid business of the wars of Tahutmes III., and the thorough manner in which he compelled the submission of the Syrian and Mesopotamian princes, the campaign of Amenhotep seems somewhat slight and trifling. It was probably more a demonstration in force than a real feat of war; but it served its end, which was to remind the vassal States that the death of Tahutmes had not shortened

the arm of Egypt. The king, like his father and great-grandfather, set up his stele at the Euphrates; and on his return to Egypt he enjoyed all the glories of a triumphal entry, in which 740 captives of both sexes were driven before him, together with 210 horses and 300 chariots.

His entry into Thebes was marked by a scene more characteristic of Assyrian than of Egyptian warfare. Six of the seven chiefs who had been captured in the land of Takshi were fastened, head downwards, to the bow of the royal galley, and were afterwards hanged before the walls of Thebes. The seventh was reserved for an example to the Nubians. Apparently the spirit of restlessness had been showing itself on the southern frontier also, for the king deemed it advisable to send an expedition up the Nile, though his personal presence was not required. The expedition pushed southwards as far as the fourth cataract, and the body of the seventh chief of Takshi was hung upon the wall of Napata, just below the cataract, 'to show forth for all time the victories of the king among all people of the negro land.' This gentle reminder of the fate which awaited all who dared to rebel against the mighty Pharaoh was apparently sufficient, as we hear of no more trouble in Nubia. Indeed, with the exception of these two expeditions, the remainder of the reign of Amenhotep seems to have been characterized by a profound and most unusual peace, lasting for upwards of twenty years. Amenhotep was not destined to earn military glory like that of his father, not because he was deficient in the desire for it, but simply because the work of Tahutmes had been so thoroughly done that there were no opponents left worthy of his steel.

Neither was it possible for him to carry on the great public works of the land on the same scale as his father, though he was not inactive, as is shown by the traces of

his work both in Egypt proper and in Nubia. In fact, Amenhotep II. has suffered the usual fate of those whose fortune it is to succeed to supremely great men: his reign has been completely overshadowed by his father's glory. Even its length was till lately a matter of dispute, for though Manetho asserts that Amenhotep reigned for twenty-five years and ten months, no dated inscription later than the fifth year was known, and Manetho's authority on this point was generally questioned, ten years being looked upon as the maximum allowable. The point was neatly settled, however, when in 1896 Petrie found among the ruins of the king's mortuary temple a wine-jar bearing the name of Amenhotep, the date of his twenty-sixth year, and the name of the vine-dresser who stored the wine—Pa-nehsi ('the negro').

Amenhotep seems to have been a strong man bodily, and to have taken a pardonable pride in his strength, claiming that no man could draw his bow. His tomb was discovered in 1898 in the Valley of the Kings. It is remarkable as being one of the two royal tombs as yet found with the kingly tenant still in occupation. The king was buried in a rose granite sarcophagus which lies in a great rock-hewn chamber, whose blue roof, gold-starred, is supported by square-sided columns. The tomb is now lit by electricity, and Amenhotep is made the subject of a somewhat theatrical display, which is scarcely in the best of taste. Along with him was found the redoubtable weapon of which he was so proud; while in a smaller chamber of the tomb lay the bodies of nine other kings which had been collected and placed there for safe-keeping in the troubled times of later Egyptian history. Of these mummies, the most important and interesting is that of Merenptah of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

Amenhotep II. was succeeded by his son Tahutmes IV. (1423-1414 B.C.). It has been conjectured that this prince

was not the natural heir-apparent, and that one or other of the more likely successors was passed over in his favour; but the evidence for this theory is not at all conclusive. It rests on the well-known legend engraven on the stele which stands between the paws of the Great Sphinx of Gizeh. The story there related is that the prince, when a young man, was hunting in the desert near to Memphis. Resting under the shadow of the Sphinx in the heat of the day, he fell asleep, and during his slumbers the god Ra Harmachis, with whom the Sphinx was then identified, appeared to him, and promised him the throne of Egypt on condition that he should clear away the sand which even in those days encumbered the great statue. 'Found he the majesty of this noble god, talking to him by his mouth, speaking like the talk of a father to his son, saying: "Look thou at me! Behold thou me! My son Tahutmes, I am thy father, Hor-em-akht, Khepra, Ra, and Tum, giving to thee the kingdom. On thee shall be placed its white crown and its red crown, on the throne of Seb the heir. . . . My face is towards thee, my heart is towards thee. . . . The sand of the desert on which I am reaches to me, spoiling me; perform thou that which is in my heart, for I know that thou art my son who reverences me; draw near, and behold I am with thee."'* The legend seems somewhat slender evidence on which to build a theory of harem intrigue and an interrupted succession, or an attempt of the priests of the Sun-god at Heliopolis to secure the throne for someone favourable to their ancient cult.

Before he had been long upon the throne, Tahutmes was summoned north by the inevitable disquiet in the Syrian provinces. Of his campaign in Naharina nothing is known, though a fragment of an inscription mentions the Kheta as among the enemies with whom he had to

* Petrie, ii. 167; 'Records of the Past,' xii. 45.

deal, while the Lateran obelisk records that he brought back with him cedar-wood from the Lebanon, to make a great barge, inlaid with gold, for the solemn processions of the god Amen-Ra. In his eighth year he carried on a campaign in Nubia, where a stele at Konosso mentions his smiting of the Wawat. He worked the mines in the Sinai Peninsula, and traces of his hand are found at Serabit-el-Khadem.

But the event of his reign which had by far the most important consequences was his marriage to the daughter of Artatama, King of Mitanni. This alliance, the first of a series of such weddings which was fraught with disastrous results to the Empire, is made known to us by a letter from Tushratta, King of Mitanni, to Amenhotep IV. Tushratta writes as follows: 'When the father of Nimmuriya [Nimmuriya is Neb-maat-ra, Amenhotep III., and his father is Tahutmes IV.] sent to Artatama, my grandfather, and asked for his daughter to wife, my grandfather refused his request; and though he sent the fifth and sixth time, he would not give her to him. It was only after he had sent the seventh time that he gave her to him.' This lengthy courtship, in which the refusals were no doubt merely formal, and for the sake of appearances, as it is not in the least likely that Artatama was not overjoyed at the thought of alliance with so powerful a king, resulted in the Mitannian princess coming down to Egypt as the wife of Tahutmes. She is possibly, though not certainly, to be identified with Mutemua, the famous mother of Amenhotep III., whose pronounced leaning towards non-Egyptian customs and ideals—a leaning which in his son became a fixed idea—would thus be largely accounted for.

The campaign in Nubia was probably the last notable event of this short reign. Manetho assigns to Tahutmes IV. a reign of only nine years and eight months, and

as the latest dated record is the Nubian stele of the eighth year, his statement is probably correct. One worthy action of the king is preserved for us by the record on the Lateran obelisk. This, the largest surviving obelisk, was the work of Tahutmes's grandfather and namesake, Tahutmes III. It had apparently never been set up, but had lain before the temple at Karnak all through the last reign. Tahutmes IV. now set it up, and added to it an inscription giving his reasons for so doing. 'His Majesty ordered that a very great obelisk should be completed which had been brought by his father, Men-kheper-ra. After His Majesty died, this obelisk remained thirty-five years and upwards in its place in the hands of the workmen at the southern quarters of Thebes. My father ordered it to be set up; I, his son, seconded him. . . . The king of the Upper and Lower Country, Lord of the Two Lands, Men-kheperu-ra [Tahutmes IV.], did it, wishing that the name of his father should remain fixed in the house of Amen.'* His only other important contribution to the great temple at Karnak was an inscription on part of the wall which Tahutmes III. had built around the base of Hatshepsut's obelisk, where he records his gifts to Amen on his return from his 'first campaign.' But his act of piety towards the memory of the old conqueror, which was probably one of the last public acts of his short reign, is a pleasing feature of an otherwise almost unknown life.

With the reign of Amenhotep III., who succeeded (1414-1379 B.C.), we reach the period of Egypt's greatest material splendour. Throughout the greater part of this reign of thirty-six years the tide of her prosperity was at its height, and though towards the close there were not wanting indications of that ebb which in the succeeding reign was to be so swift, yet Amenhotep, the most magnificent, if not the greatest, of Egyptian kings, went down

* 'Records of the Past,' iv. 11.

to his grave in peace, without any apparent diminution of the power and splendour which had surrounded him during his life. Amenhotep III. was the son of Tahutmes IV. by his wife Mutemua, who may possibly have been the daughter of Artatama of Mitanni; but even a parentage doubly royal was not deemed sufficiently exalted for so splendid a monarch, and, as in the case of Hatshepsut, a legend was elaborated and afterwards engraven upon the walls of the great temple at Luqsor, according to which the king's real father was the god Amen, who had taken the shape of Tahutmes IV. The young king's accession was unmarked by any outbreak of restlessness. Syria, for once, was in a state of profound peace—so far, at all events, as regarded her relations with Egypt. It was not till his fifth year that trouble in Nubia called him south. Passing the first cataract, he joined his forces with a local contingent raised by Merimes, the 'Royal Prince of Kush,' or Viceroy of Nubia, and at Abhat, probably above the second cataract, south of Wady Halfa, he met the rebellious Nubians. The result of the encounter was what might have been expected: the Nubians were routed, 312 of them were slain, and 740 prisoners of all ages and both sexes were taken. The success was commemorated by inscriptions at Konosso, at Aswan, and at Semneh, and, as a more permanent and conspicuous memorial of his victory, Amenhotep built a large temple at Soleb, near the head of the third cataract. This temple, whose ruins are still very considerable, was the largest Egyptian building ever erected in Nubia, measuring over 300 feet in length.

Some time before his tenth year the king had married the celebrated Queen Tyi, the woman whose influence upon the history of Egypt was destined to be so great and ultimately so disastrous. There has been much dispute concerning the origin of this woman. It has been conjectured that she was either a North Syrian or a Mitannian

COLONNADE OF FORECOURT, LUQSOR.

princess. What is certainly known is that her father and mother were named Yuaa and Thuaa, and that both their tomb and that of the great queen, their daughter, were recently discovered in the Valley of the Kings. What evidence they afford is summed up by Mr. Quibell thus: 'If Yuaa was a foreigner, as has been thought, it must be admitted that he had a very orthodox Egyptian funeral.'* Whatever her origin may have been, there can be no question as to the direction which Tyi's sympathies took, and in which her power was exerted. Her portrait statuette, of which the head was discovered by Petrie at Serabit-el-Khadem, and the remarkable head in ebony and gold found in the Fayum both show a face of distinct character and great charm, and one cannot wonder at the influence which she had over her husband and her unfortunate son. That this was great is shown, in the case of her husband, by the marriage scarabs which Amenhotep caused to be issued. He mentions her on these as 'The Great Royal Lady, Tyi, the living—the name of her father was Yuaa, the name of her mother was Thuaa. She is the wife of a mighty king. His southern frontiers are to Kari, his northern are to Naharina.' Even when, in his tenth year, the king sought and obtained in marriage Kirgipa or Gilukhipa, the daughter of Shutarna, King of Mitanni, a princess who came to her husband in truly regal state with a train of 317 maids-of-honour to attend upon her, the influence of the plebeian Tyi still remained supreme. The same scarab which records the coming of the Mitannian princess repeats the statements as to Tyi and her parentage.

After his Nubian expedition, Amenhotep seems to have enjoyed peace during all the rest of his reign. On one occasion he journeyed as far as Sidon; but, so far as appears, the errand which took him there was not warlike. Indeed, to all seeming, his Empire in Asia was firmly established,

* *See note on p.* 168.

and likely to remain secure. A few years were to show how little real solidity there was in its fabric; but meanwhile all was tranquil, and no enemy was within sight who could dispute, even for a moment, the supremacy of the great southern power. The policy of Tahutmes III. was now bearing its fruits. After each successive campaign he had carried down into Egypt as hostages the sons of the conquered chiefs; and as vacancies occurred in the succession, these young men, who had received an Egyptian training, were sent by the Pharaoh to occupy the thrones of their fathers; and thus a generation of princes grew up in Syria and Naharina who had learned, if not to love Egypt, at least to know and respect her power. In fact, at this period the Egyptian court appears as the focus of that ancient world, and its king is the central luminary from whom all the surrounding royalties derive their light and guidance.

A very interesting glimpse into the state of affairs and into the life of the period is given by the famous Tell-el-Amarna letters, which belong partly to this and partly to the subsequent reign. These letters, which are written in cuneiform script on clay tablets, were discovered at a place named Tell-el-Amarna, the site of the city Akhetaten, which was the capital of King Akhenaten or Amenhotep IV. They give us a portion of the diplomatic correspondence which passed during these two reigns between the Egyptian kings and various Asiatic and Island royalties and the governors and residents who represented Egypt in Asia. Most of them, as we shall see later, refer to events in the reign of Amenhotep IV., when the Egyptian Empire was gradually falling to pieces under assaults from without and neglect from within. But a few belong to the times of the great Amenhotep, and present a singularly vivid and curious picture of his relationships with the various potentates around him.

Among these, the first place must be given to Tushratta, King of Mitanni, the land which had been the persistent enemy of Tahutmes III. Tushratta is already connected by marriage with the Egyptian royal house, for he was the grandson of that Artatama whose daughter was Amenhotep's mother, and was further the brother of Amenhotep's own Mitannian wife, Gilukhipa. Tushratta's correspondence, so far as we have it, opens with the mention of a name of evil omen for Egypt. The Khatti, or Hittites, he says, have already been attacking him; but by the grace of his god Tishub he has conquered them, and now sends to his brother-in-law a chariot and two horses, with a lad and a girl out of his booty. He sends also presents to his sister Gilukhipa. Shortly we find him negotiating a new marriage connection with Egypt. Amenhotep has asked for a Mitannian princess to be wife to his young son. Tushratta has joyfully complied with the request; and when Mani, the Egyptian envoy, saw the princess destined for the young Amenhotep, he rejoiced greatly. 'When he brings her safely to my brother's land,' writes Tushratta, 'then may Ishtar and Amen make her corresponding to my brother's wish.' The young princess here mentioned is probably Tadukhipa, who became the wife of Amenhotep IV. Even with such good-will, however, the course of the marriage negotiations did not run absolutely smooth. So mighty a king as Amenhotep was of course a very eligible connection; but his main virtue was his wealth, and Tushratta feels that he has a grievance in that he is not getting a sufficient share of that in return for his matrimonial complaisances. 'I said to my brother, "Let my brother make our friendship ten times greater than with my father," and I asked of my brother a great deal of gold, saying, "More than to my father let my brother give me and send me." Thou sentest my father a great deal of gold: a *namkar* of pure

gold, and a *kiru* of pure gold thou sentest him; but thou sentest me only a tablet of gold that is, as it were, alloyed with copper. So let my brother send gold in very great quantities, without measure, and let him send more gold to me than to my father. For in my brother's land gold is as common as dust.'* All through Tushratta sings in the same strain, and however desirable the Mitannian princesses may have been, it must have been somewhat wearing to be brother-in-law to such a sturdy and shameless beggar.

But, indeed, in these letters the kings of the East appear to be all very much birds of a feather. Their sentiments are not in the least lofty. Egypt is the dreaded power, to be propitiated with constant presents and protestations; but she is still more the gold-mine, from which the greedy dynasts expect to get prompt return, with good interest, for their generosity. The King of Babylon, Kadashman-Kharbe, is in the same story with Tushratta, and 'much gold' is ever the burden of his song also. But Kadashman-Kharbe has an interest all his own from the naïve way in which he proposes to surmount a formidable difficulty in his marriage negotiations. He has asked for an Egyptian princess to be his wife, and Amenhotep has returned a sufficiently disdainful answer, implying that the daughters of the Egyptian royal house did not mate with nobodies such as the King of Babylon. But Kadashman-Kharbe is in nowise abashed. He suggests with the greatest coolness that there must be many beautiful women in Egypt; let Amenhotep send him one of these, and he will be satisfied, for 'who here could say that she is not a princess?' The spectacle of the King of Babylon the Great calmly proposing to palm off on his confiding people a beautiful plebeian from Egypt as a scion of the true solar stock is sufficiently edifying.

The most manly of Amenhotep's correspondents is the

* Breasted, 'History of Egypt,' p. 334.

King of Alashia, or Cyprus, who sends large consignments of copper frequently, and warns the Egyptian king, not without reason, against the designs of the Khatti. His request that his messengers shall not be interfered with by the Egyptian custom-house officers shows that Amenhotep had established a system of taxation of imports; while one request that the property of a Cypriot who had died in Egypt, leaving a wife and son in Cyprus, should be returned to them shows how completely the relations of the two countries had been regularized and placed on a business footing.

The picture thus presented of this old world and the relationships of its kingdoms to one another is remarkable. We see that communication had been organized in a manner never suspected before the discovery of these letters; that there was a regularly recognized diplomatic language; that each king kept his envoys going and coming to and from the countries of his brother-sovereigns, and was well informed as to what was happening. Chiefly, for our present purpose, we see the proud position occupied by Egypt. She is supreme. The other nations seek her alliance, and intrigue one against the other for the possession of her favour. They are eager to propitiate her monarch; and behind all their dread of her power lies the belief that she is the land of inexhaustible wealth, from which treasure may be had for the asking. Altogether the picture is not a very exalted one, but it is very human.

Thus, with the whole world at its feet, the land of Egypt entered upon what appears to be the inevitable second stage of the development of great empires—the stage in which the impetus which made the empire has died away, and the conquering race is content to rest upon the achievements of the past, and to exploit to its own advantage the prestige which the past has won. For Egypt, this stage was destined to be a short one, and to be followed, in a single generation, by the equally inevitable

third stage, that of decline. The appetite for conquest was satiated, and the Egyptian, never by nature a warlike being, turned with avidity to gratify his appetite for luxury and enjoyment. Accordingly, while, as we shall see, the latter part of the reign of Amenhotep was marked by ominous indications of coming trouble, its meridian is a period of unexampled splendour. The king was now able to command resources, native and foreign, such as none of his predecessors had ever been privileged to handle. The internal prosperity of his kingdom was great, and wise administration had resulted in a large increase of the wealth in the land. From every side the great peoples of the ancient world were becoming tributary to Egypt, not all in the strict sense of the term, but in that far more important one which is realized through the avenues of commerce. We have already seen how Cyprus carried on a regular interchange of commodities with Egypt, and how the business relationships of the two States were regulated even in such small matters as the restitution of the estate of a single deceased individual. The Phœnicians were vassals of Egypt, as well as traders in her markets. Crete, which was then in the height of that wonderful civilization of the sea-kings which has been revealed by the discoveries at Knossos, came willingly under the spell of the older civilization of Egypt, and ample traces of Egyptian influence have been found. The Isles of the Ægean, and even the northern mainland of the Mediterranean, were reached by the tide of power which the great nation of the Nile Valley was sending forth; and both at Mykenæ and Orchomenos there is evidence that the Mykenæan civilization was being profoundly impressed, alike in art and in manufacture, by that of Egypt. Conversely, Egypt was more and more opening her gates to the influx of the products of the younger peoples, and in addition to all the overland traffic which brought to her the products of Syria,

Naharina, and Babylonia, her ports were being crowded with the galleys of all the Eastern Mediterranean nations, laden with their manufactures and art treasures. The great river was burdened with the fleets of the trading peoples of the ancient world, eager to take and to maintain a place in the favour of the greatest of trading nations. On the skirts of all this legitimate activity there hung, as ever,

FIG. 19.—DRESS OF KING (EMPIRE).

FIG. 20.—DRESS OF QUEEN (EMPIRE).

the vultures which prey upon the prosperity of others. The Lykian pirates were already beginning to make their name known and dreaded, and Amenhotêp was obliged to organize a special coast-guard service for the protection of the trade-routes.

All this inflow of trade was not only profitable to the merchants and manufacturers of the country; it was made

a direct source of revenue to the State, as we have seen, by means of a custom-house service, which was established at the ports on the Nile mouths, and no doubt also at all the frontier posts of the kingdom. Thus King Amenhotep must have had at his command a great revenue, alike from the prosperous native subjects of the Crown, from the tributary States, and from the taxes which were levied upon all imports. It cannot be denied that he made a magnificent, and in some respects even a noble, use of his resources. No doubt there was a great amount of needless, and perhaps senseless, luxury. The court appears to have been organized with great splendour; and perhaps more money than was either necessary or justifiable was spent upon merely personal whims of the great monarch and his womankind, such as the excavation of a lake more than a mile long in order that Queen Tyi might enjoy a water festival upon it with her royal consort. But King Amenhotep has left more worthy relics of his magnificence than such trivialities, harmless though they may have been, and, but for him, Egypt would be shorn of many of her most remarkable and beautiful treasures of architecture.

As had happened in the case of Hatshepsut and Senmut, the splendid tastes of Amenhotep were seconded by the genius of a man who has left a great reputation in the land. This was the king's namesake, Amenhotep, the son of Hapu, who was the royal factotum, as Senmut had been in the earlier reign, and who so succeeded in impressing his fellow-countrymen with his supreme ability that his name gradually became the subject of legend, and he was classed with Imhotep and Hordadef as a divine genius whose counsel was 'as though one inquired at the oracle of God.' Under the skilled direction of this great man, Amenhotep III. proceeded to adorn Thebes with buildings before whose magnificence the former splendours even of Karnak were dimmed. The great structure by

UNFINISHED NAVE, TEMPLE OF LUQSOR.

which his name is best remembered is the enormous temple which he reared, and which still stands at Luqsor, about one mile and a half from the temple of Karnak. Here he laid out a noble court, surrounded by beautiful papyrus-bud columns, in itself one of the most remarkable of Egyptian sacred buildings. But this was meant to be only a part of a far more ambitious design. Before it again he reared a great colonnade of fourteen huge pillars, whose capitals were of the open-flower type. This was destined to be the nave of a hypostyle hall, like that built later at Karnak by Sety I., and to be flanked by lower side-aisles. Unfortunately, Amenhotep did not live to see the completion of this hall, which would have almost rivalled the subsequent erection at Karnak. His son was too bitterly opposed to the traditional faith to contribute anything to its completion, and none of the succeeding kings was able to finish what the genius and power of the two Amenhoteps, architect and king, had so gloriously begun. The great colonnade stands to this day unfinished; but its vast and finely proportioned pillars, the largest ever erected up to that time by the hand of man, witness to the genius and taste which planned this noble example of sacred architecture.

Nor was Karnak neglected. Before the buildings of his predecessors Amenhotep reared a vast pylon whose front was adorned with two obelisks and with steles of lapis lazuli inlaid with malachite. He then connected the two temples by a long avenue of ram-headed sphinxes. 'The general effect,' says Breasted, 'must have been imposing in the extreme; the brilliant hues of the polychrome architecture, with columns and gates overwrought in gold and floors overlaid with silver, the whole dominated by towering obelisks clothed in glittering metal, rising high above the rich green of the nodding palms and tropical foliage which framed the mass—all this must have pro-

duced an impression both of gorgeous detail and overwhelming grandeur, of which the sombre ruins of the same buildings, impressive as they are, offer little hint at the present day.' At the south end of Karnak Amenhotep added to, and perhaps largely re-erected, an important temple to the goddess Mut, of which the ruins still survive, and were recently thoroughly excavated by the Misses Benson and Gourlay.

What was probably Amenhotep's most important building has almost entirely vanished, not so much under the hand of Time as under the barbarous spoliation of succeeding monarchs. This was his great mortuary temple on the western bank of the Nile. It was the largest structure of his reign. Through an avenue of couchant jackals, each bearing a statue of the king between its paws, the approach from the river led up to a great pylon, now entirely vanished, before which rose two colossal seated statues of Amenhotep. Other colossi stood in the courts of the temple behind, and one huge stele of sandstone, 30 by 14 feet, and once encrusted 'with gold and many precious stones,' decorated the forecourt of the building, and still lies on the ground among the ruins, broken in two. Another beautiful granite stele, found by Petrie in Merenptah's funerary temple, gives details of the whole structure, in which Amenhotep took a manifest and pardonable pride. 'A glorious house of the gods in the west of Thebes, a fortress of Eternity for eternity, of beautiful light-coloured sandstone, adorned all over with gold; its floor is inlaid with silver, all its doors with electron . . . and ornamented with . . . many royal statues of granite from Elephantine, of wonderful stones and all kinds of precious stones, finished as works of eternity. . . . It is provided with a stele of the king, which is adorned with gold and many precious stones. The masts are erected before it adorned with electron.

AVENUE OF SPHINXES, THEBES.

It is like the horizon of the sky when Ra rises in it.'* All this magnificence has long since passed away. But the great portrait-statues of the king, hewn out of single blocks of red breccia, and weighing not less than 700 tons apiece, still sit with hands on knees, gazing with stony stare over the ruins of so much splendour. They were the pride of the architect Amenhotep son of Hapu, and the greatest of his works. 'I undertook the works of his statues, great in width, and higher than his pylon; their beauties eclipsed the pylon; their length was forty cubits in the noble rock of quartzite. I built a great barge; I sailed it up the river, and I fixed the statues in his great temple firm like heaven.' The northernmost statue of the pair has become celebrated over the whole world owing to the disaster which almost destroyed it. Its upper part was thrown down by an earthquake in 27 B.C., and thereafter it emitted at sunrise a curious musical note. The Greeks identified the singing statue with Memnon, the son of Tithonus and Aurora, and tourists came from all parts of the Roman Empire to hear Memnon sing at sunrise. Like tourists, they have left their impressions of his performance scrawled all over the base of the great statue. The emperor Septimius Severus thought to do Memnon honour by repairing his statue, and built up the broken part with the blocks which still remain; but the effect was disastrous. Memnon was struck dumb, and has remained dumb ever since.

With such great buildings as these King Amenhotep sought to make Thebes a worthy capital of the great Empire over which he ruled. But his activities were not confined to Thebes. From the Delta on the north to Soleb, Sedeinga, and Napata on the south, his temples sprang up one after the other. That at Sedeinga was reared in honour of his beloved wife Tyi, while that at

* Spiegelberg in 'Six Temples at Thebes,' p. 24.

Soleb is kept in memory by the two noble statues of couchant lions, now in the British Museum, which have been pronounced by Ruskin to be the finest examples of animal sculpture surviving from ancient times. At Elephantine he reared a small, but peculiarly interesting and beautiful temple, which in its form anticipated many of the best features of Grecian temple architecture. Unfortunately, this little gem of art, which still survived when Napoleon's expedition was in Egypt, has utterly perished, having been razed to its very foundation by one of the local governors, who in 1822 had occasion to seek stone for some of the buildings of Mehemet Ali, and could find none so handy as the material of one of the loveliest and most unique specimens of Egyptian architecture.

In such labours the last of the great emperors of Egypt's palmy days passed the thirty-six years of his peaceful reign. His more solid tasks were not undiversified by lighter undertakings. Thus we read of his excavation of the lake, already alluded to, on which he and his wife Tyi took their pleasure in a gorgeous water fête, sailing in their bark called *Aten-Gleams*—a title which suggests the growing influence of the new religious cult which was to produce such remarkable results in the next reign. The king considered this festival of sufficient importance to be celebrated on a special scarab issued for the occasion. At other times he indulged, like his great ancestor, Tahutmes III., in the more dangerous joys of big-game hunting, and his hunting scarab tells of the slaying of 102 lions—no bad record for days of bow and spear.

Latterly it is possible that he may have felt the ground ringing somewhat hollow under his feet. The Syrian princes still addressed him in their letters with the most extravagant protests of humble service and faithfulness; but too often the news which they had to convey to him was ominous in the extreme. Already we have seen that

the Hittites had been appearing on the Mitannian frontier, and though repulsed by Dushratta, they returned again and again to the attack, and their steady and persistent pressure was beginning to tell. Had Amenhotep realized the significance of what his vassals told him, and advanced in person at the head of his army, the situation might yet have been saved. But apparently he did not grasp the fact that the whole northern part of his Empire was threatened. As one of the vassals of the Amarna letters wrote later to Amenhotep IV., 'Verily thy father did not march forth, nor inspect the lands of his vassal princes.' So, undisturbed by the one hand which could have restrained them, the Hittites pressed steadily in upon the frontiers of the Empire, cutting off vassal after vassal of the Egyptian king, in spite of the despairing letters which vainly called for help against the invaders. From Akizzi of Qatna, from Hadad-Nirari of Nukhashshi, from Rib-addi of Byblos, there comes always the same story of pressure from without, and lack of support from within. Under such circumstances one can scarcely wonder that some of the tributary princes fell away from their allegiance, and made terms with the power which was able to harm them, since Egypt was seemingly unable or unwilling to protect. Nor were the Hittites the only enemies who menaced the Egyptian supremacy. The wandering tribes of desert Semites, known as the Khabiri, or 'confederates,' were also threatening the frontiers of the Empire, and, indeed, had to some extent already established themselves on Egyptian territory.

But Amenhotep paid no heed to these omens. The magnificence around him may have blinded his eyes to the distant danger; or perhaps the lethargy of age was creeping over a life which had never been one of strenuous warlike ambitions, and the old king was content to implore his father Amen to grant peace in his time. At last the

end came. Not even the great goddess Ishtar of Nineveh, whose image the King of Mitanni sent down to Thebes that it might cure the dying king of his sickness, proved of any avail, and after a reign of thirty-six years Amenhotep closed his eyes upon that world-stage on which he had played so splendid a part.

*Note to p.* 155.—He may have been a Levantine. In one inscription he is called 'Prince of Zahi' (Lebanon District), but this might be only an official title, without reference to his origin.

COLOSSI OF AMENHOTEP III., THEBES.

## CHAPTER IX

### AKHENATEN'S RELIGIOUS REFORMATION AND THE DECAY OF THE EMPIRE

THE position of affairs in the Empire at the close of the reign of Amenhotep III. was such as to call urgently for a strong hand at the helm of the ship of State. Not even Tahutmes III. himself could have faced with unconcern the formidable dangers which were threatening the fabric he had so strenuously reared; but a man with something of his swiftness and energy might well have changed the course of history at this point. It can be imagined how the old conqueror would have roused himself on the receipt of letters from Naharina or Syria such as were waved aside by the magnificent Amenhotep, and languidly docketed by the cuneiform scribe who acted as secretary for foreign correspondence. He would have been on the march as soon as his army could be mobilized, and would have probably taught the Hittites and their allies a lesson which would have kept them quiet for a generation. It was not to be, however. Amenhotep's sceptre passed, indeed, into the hands of one of the most remarkable men of history; but he was a man remarkable precisely for the qualities which were fatal at such a moment as that which confronted him. Amenhotep IV. was a visionary—a man, evidently, of many lovable qualities, with much intellectual power, and with the loftiest conceptions of religion which had yet dawned upon mankind; but he was also either constitutionally incapable of

the prompt and stern action which might have saved his Empire, or fanatically indifferent, in his devotion to the spiritual and ideal, as to how the tide of material affairs might flow. The result was disaster to the barely consolidated Empire of Egypt, and failure even in the attainment of the ideals on which the king had set his heart.

Amenhotep IV. was scarcely more than a boy when his father died, though he may have been co-regent for some little time; and it would appear that for a brief space Queen Tyi exercised modified royal functions as regent; her name, at least, appears alone in one inscription. But, whether she actually ruled or not, there can be little question that she was the power behind the throne, and that her influence is to be traced in the extraordinary developments which mark her son's reign. How long she lived to influence him is not known. The last resting-place of this remarkable woman was discovered in 1907 by Mr. T. M. Davis in the Valley of the Kings. The coffin, covered originally by a highly decorated catafalque overlaid with gold, contained a golden vulture diadem, a necklace of gold, and the usual canopic jars, bearing, in this case, four fine alabaster portrait-heads, instead of the four customary genii. Strangely enough, the bones in the coffin were not those of Tyi. On inspection they proved to be the bones of a comparatively young man, and it seems not unlikely that they are those of her unfortunate son.*

Mention has already been made of the gradual change which had now been going on for several generations in the Egyptian character and physique by reason of the steady influx of Syrian and Mesopotamian elements. The change is marked, alike in the features of the new generations which were rising up (if the sculptures are to be trusted), in the manner of living, and in the habit of thought. It was in the sphere of ideas that the world

* See Mr. Weigall's statement, quoted in Chapter XVIII.

was now to learn how far-reaching the change had been. We noted in passing that one of the slighter incidents of the reign of Amenhotep III. was the water festival in which the king and queen sailed together on the newly excavated lake in their bark called *Tehen-Aten* ('Aten-Gleams'). In that title we have an indication of the new religious conception which now began to make its appearance on the horizon of Egyptian religion, and which, from a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, spread across the whole sky, until it darkened the land with a veritable 'twilight of the gods' of ancient Egypt.

The worship of the Sun-god was one of the oldest of Egyptian cults. We have seen how in the Fifth Dynasty the priests of Ra were able to grasp the royal power, and how that dynasty visibly bears the impress of sun-worship. From that time onwards Ra had always stood high in the Egyptian Pantheon. But with the rise of Thebes under the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Dynasties a new claimant to supremacy had appeared in the person of Amen, the god of Thebes, who, formerly a mere local divinity of no great importance, now gradually assumed the first place, and arrogated to himself, or had arrogated to him by his priesthood, an amount of dignity and power out of all proportion to that accorded to the more ancient gods of the land. But the worship of the Sun-god was now to reassert itself, though in a manner totally different from that which had formerly characterized it. It is difficult to say how much of the new religious teaching which now began to be thrust to the front by the young king is to be looked upon as an importation of the worship of the Syrian Adon. The title by which the new divinity was to be known in Egypt has probably no connection with the Syrian title. 'Aten' was a word of long standing in Egypt, and it cannot be said that there was anything un-Egyptian in the ideas which were symbolized by the title. Atenism was

a natural growth from roots which struck deep in Egyptian thought.

What Amenhotep IV. designed was nothing less than the supersession of all the gods of Egypt, and the establishment of a monotheism. This monotheism took the form of sun-worship; but it was by no means the material form of sun-worship with which the Egyptians were already familiar. On the contrary, that which was now exalted for worship was an abstract conception of divinity. Amenhotep's new god was really the vital power which expresses itself by the sun and his life-giving light and heat.* To this manifestation of divinity a special name was given—'Ra-Horus, who shouts for joy on the horizon, who rejoices in his name, "Brightness that is in the globe of the sun."' In the representation of the new deity the vital heat is typified by rays darting out from the solar disc, each ray ending in a hand, which sometimes grasps the 'ankh' or 'crux ansata,' the symbol of life (Fig. 22). What particular doctrines were taught with regard to the Aten we have no means of knowing, save from the hymns which will fall to be considered later; but the new conception is at least one of considerable interest. It is the first attempt to break away from the old idea of local or national divinities, and to substitute the thought of a universal god who is a living, vital force. 'The important dogma in the new faith,' says Steindorff, 'is that which maintains Aton to be the creator, orderer, and governor of the whole world, and not of Egypt alone. He was the King of the All; and this attribute was expressed in a naïve fashion by enclosing his name, like that of an earthly Pharaoh, in an oval ring, and by the addition of a number of epithets, such as "the living globe of the sun, the lord of all which the globe of the sun compasses, who illuminates Egypt, the lord of the sun's rays."'*

* On this point, see the discussion in Chapter XVIII.

Amenhotep's resolve to impose his new deity upon the nation was first evidenced by his erection of a magnificent shrine at Thebes in the immediate neighbourhood of the great temple of Amen at Karnak. This shrine bore evidence that the new faith had as yet scarcely reached its full development. 'The new god was represented exactly like the old Ra-Horus, in the form of a man with the head of a hawk, wearing for a crown the sun encircled with the uræus serpent.' Later in the Reformation this representation would not have been looked upon as satisfactory; for another characteristic of the fully developed faith was that it rejected every personal representation or image of the god. Worship, as already noticed, was paid solely to the light- and life-giving heat of the sun, portrayed as a disc with rays and hands. Thebes was now known as 'The City of the Brightness of Aten,' and in every possible way the old worship of Amen was discouraged and the new faith exalted. For a while the cult of the Aten existed alongside that of Amen and the other gods. But the very essence of the creed of Amenhotep IV. was that it was exclusive. Amen could tolerate other gods beside him. If he was supreme in Thebes, Ra was supreme in Heliopolis, and Ptah in Memphis. But the Aten was the sole god—'a jealous god,' according to the Hebrew phrase, and toleration of other deities was impossible in his cult. It was therefore inevitable that there should be a struggle between the Aten worship and the old religions, and the head and front of the struggle was bound to be at Thebes. Amen was there the supreme god; his priesthood was the most powerful organized body in the land; his temples and his revenues were far greater than those of any other god; many of the highest offices in the State were held, or had been held, by his servants. It was not to be expected that, without a struggle, they would consent to see their divine master thrust down from

his pride of place, their own importance curtailed, and their prospects of advancement suddenly brought to an end. The particulars of the struggle between the two faiths are unknown to us, and we cannot tell whether there was, on the part of the king, any persecution of the persons of those who held the ancient beliefs; but we are aware of the fact that there was persecution of the faiths they held.

In the sixth year of his reign Amenhotep IV. proclaimed the Aten worship to be the State religion. All the subjects of the Empire were henceforth required to serve only the one god, and no doubt the young king found a considerable body of public opinion to support him in the step which he had taken. Many, doubtless, were convinced believers in the new creed; but it is permissible also to suppose that when a great king proclaimed his change of faith, a large percentage of those who adhered to him was influenced, not by conviction, but by interest. The courtiers, the officials, all who had places to keep, or who hoped that there might be places to gain, gave in their allegiance to the new faith—an allegiance which they threw off again as readily when Amenhotep passed away and his work was being undone. But one class of the community, and that the most powerful and influential class, stood sullenly aloof. This was the priesthood—not only the priesthood of Amen, but that also of most of the other gods of the land. No doubt the Heliopolitan college of priests would welcome for a time the change which had come, but it may be questioned whether even their support would be given whole-heartedly when it was found how radically exclusive was the cult of the Aten. The opposition of the priesthood led to strong measures on the part of the king. The temples were closed throughout the whole land, and their revenues confiscated. Everywhere the statues of the ancient Egyptian gods were destroyed,

so far as possible, their figures erased from the sculptures on the walls, their very names blotted out from the inscriptions. As the priests of Amen had been the most stubborn opponents of the king's creed, so against their god were the most stringent measures taken. The king attempted to destroy every trace of Amen and of Amen-worship from the land. The goddess Mut and the moon-god Khonsu, the other members of the Theban triad, shared in the proscription. Wherever the name of Amen appeared, whether in temple or on statue, it was mercilessly hammered out. Even the royal statues of the great kings of the past were not spared; and, consistent to the very utmost, the young king had no mercy even on the title of his own great father, but erased the name of Amen from it. All men who bore a name compounded with the title of the detested divinity were required to alter it to something more consonant with the new views of their royal master; and, foremost of the whole nation, the king himself, whose own name signifies 'Amen is content,' renounced the title which his ancestors had made glorious, and renamed himself 'Akhenaten,' or 'The Disk is satisfied.'

Another great change quickly followed, and was, indeed, the inevitable consequence of the step to which the king had committed himself. Thebes must have become intolerable to the fanatical devotee of the new religion. It was the town of Amen; all its great and glorious memories were linked with the deposed god. The king might batter the temple inscriptions as he pleased, but he could not help remembering that practically everything which he saw around him clamoured against his parvenu creed. The great silent temples, with their broken statues and their mutilated inscriptions, greeted his eyes wherever he might turn; a sullen priesthood, cast down from its pride of place, and robbed of its very means of sustenance, scowled upon him in the streets. Living in Thebes under

such circumstances must have been almost as pleasant as for a murderer to live in the same room with the dead body of his victim. No doubt there was not wanting the suggestion that the priests of Amen might not be too scrupulous in seeking means to avenge the honour of their god and their own humiliation upon the heretic who had brought their glory to the dust. Accordingly, before his sixth year was out, Akhenaten had determined upon, and partly carried into execution, another radical change. He shifted the capital and the seat of government of the Empire bodily away from the city which had become hateful to him.

Nearly 300 miles north of Thebes he chose a new site on a plain between the river and the eastern cliffs, and here he established a city whose name, 'Akhet aten' ('The Horizon of the Solar Disc,') indicated its devotion to the court religion. The site is known at the present time as Tell-el-Amarna, and here were found the famous letters whose importance we have already to some extent seen, and of which we have yet to hear more. The country around the new capital, for a distance of four miles on either side, was marked out by great boundary steles as the domain of the solar god, which thus embraced a district of eight miles in length along the river, and from twelve to seventeen miles in width from the eastern to the western cliffs. On the boundary steles a curious phrase occurs which seems to indicate that the king, in his detestation of the territories which had been polluted by the presence of the ancient gods, had resolved never to leave the precincts of the dominion which he had now assigned to the divinity of his devotion. 'I shall not pass,' he says, 'beyond the southern landmark of Akhet-aten toward the south, nor shall I pass beyond the northern landmark of Akhet-aten toward the north.'* The phrase, however, may be capable of a less stringent explanation, and it is scarcely probable

* See N. de Garis Davies, 'The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna,' vol. v., p. 19 *sq.*

of a less stringent explanation, and it is scarcely probable that the king's resolution was so extreme as might appear.

In the new capital there quickly rose no fewer than three temples to the Aten—one the great state temple of the king himself, another for his mother Tyi, and a third for his daughter. A new priesthood was appointed to carry on the service of the god in these buildings, the high-priest being given the title of 'Great Seer.' The first to fill this office was the priest Mery-ra, whose tomb contains the scenes which have afforded our information with respect to the Aten temples and their appointments. The royal palace which adorned the capital was apparently built of brick, and was of considerable extent. It was approached by a great gateway, and was surrounded with gardens. The audience-chambers were ornamented with painted and gilded pillars, while the walls of the whole palace seem to have been covered with frescoes representing scenes from common life. 'In one of the halls which seems to have belonged to the harem,' says Maspero, 'there is still to be seen the picture of a rectangular piece of water containing fish and lotus-flowers in full bloom; the edge is adorned with water-plants and flowering shrubs, among which birds fly, and calves graze and gambol; on the right and left were depicted rows of stands laden with fruit, while at each end of the room were seen the grinning faces of a gang of negro and Syrian prisoners, separated from each other by gigantic arches. The tone of colouring is bright and cheerful, and the animals are treated with great freedom and facility.'

In this connection must be noted the sudden development which took place in Egyptian art concurrently with the reformation of religion. One of the titles which the king most frequently affects is 'Ankh-em-maat' ('Living in Truth'); and it would appear as though the desire after truth extended itself even to the artistic ideals of the time.

The school of artists whose work is seen at Tell-el-Amarna has departed entirely from the old conventions of Egyptian art. The figures of the king and his family are no longer depicted in the traditional postures, but are treated naturally; on one occasion the queen Nefertiti is actually represented as seated affectionately on her royal husband's knee—a phenomenon otherwise unexampled in the art of the country, if not in fact. The same naturalism is characteristic of all the work of the time and place. For the first and last time in the history of the nation, her artists were apparently left free to depict things as they saw them, instead of being obliged to force their subjects into a conventional mould. The results of this casting off of swaddling-bands are, as was to be expected, of very unequal merit in different hands. Sometimes the product of the new art is merely grotesque; at other times it is singularly truthful and vivacious, but always it is interesting. One peculiarity is very pronounced—namely, the abnormal development which the court artists give to the abdomen and the lower limbs of their subjects. This is so great as to amount to a deformity. Whether it corresponded to an actual deformation in the king himself, which led to a desire on the part of the courtiers to imitate their sovereign lord even in his defects, cannot be said; at all events, the feature seems to point to something morbid in the thought or the perceptions of the time. If we are to judge from the representations which remain to us, the king must have been of a kind and affectionate nature. He is almost invariably represented in company with his wife Nefertiti and his daughters, of whom there were six; and these representations make up a very pretty picture of the natural domestic life of the only Pharaoh who has chosen to be pictured as he was. (The figure shows Akhenaten and Nefertiti apparently in the act of kissing one another in their chariot, while one of their

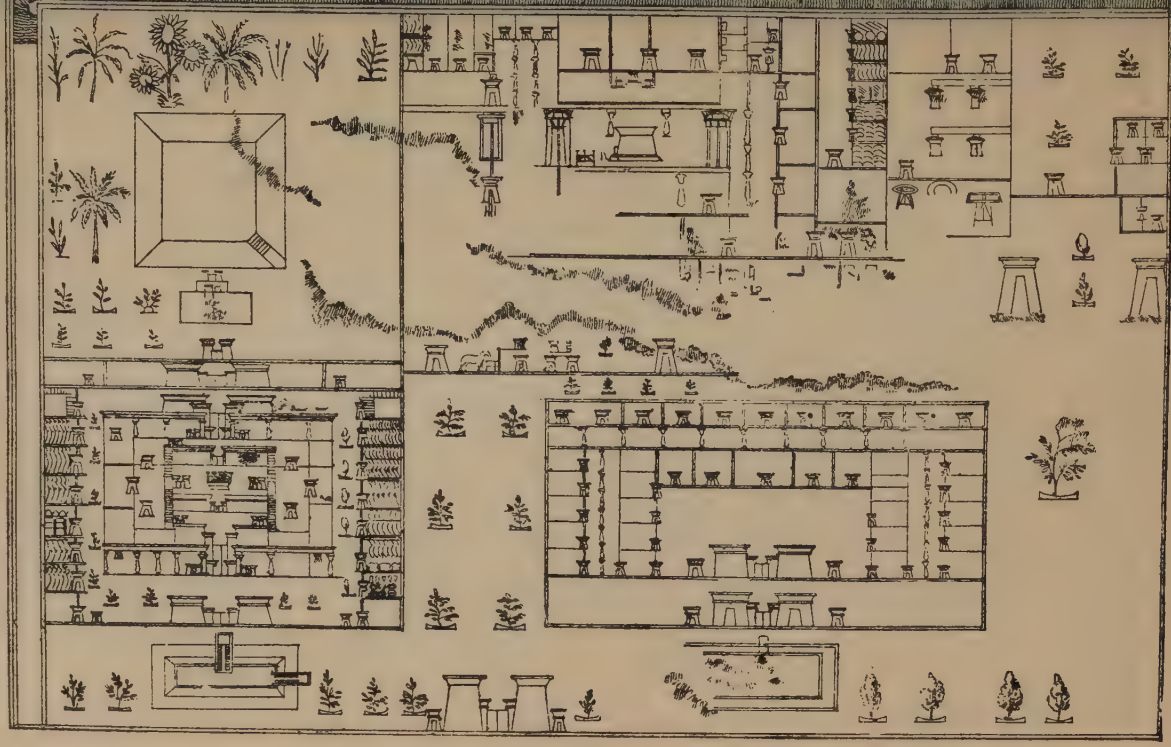


FIG. 21.—PLAN OF PART OF ATEN TEMPLE, TELL-EL-AMARNA.

daughters leans over the front of the car watching the horses.)

Side by side with the new development in art there went a new development in literature. The only memorials which it has left to us are the two hymns to the Aten, the composition of which has, with great probability, been

FIG. 22.—AKHENATEN AND HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER IN THEIR CHARIOT.

ascribed to Akhenaten himself. In these remarkable hymns are preserved what may be regarded as the outlines of the conception entertained by the king of the god to whom his devotion was addressed. The subject of praise all through is the living power of the god to cause and to maintain and regulate all life; and this thought is developed with considerable power and grace of expression, and with a grasp of the universal nature of such a divinity which is very noteworthy. Akhenaten has no

sympathy whatever with the most firmly rooted religious conception of ancient times—that of the local or national divinity. To him his god is god over all.

'In the hills from Syria to Kush, and the plain of Egypt,
Thou givest to everyone his place, thou framest their lives;
To everyone his belongings, reckoning his length of days.'

One is forcibly reminded of the words of a greater religious teacher than Akhenaten: 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed,

FIG. 23.—SERVANT WITH CHARIOT, TELL-EL-AMARNA.

and the bounds of their habitation.' The whole hymn has been repeatedly compared with Ps. civ., to which, indeed, it presents very obvious resemblances. A verse or two of Mr. Griffith's translation will help to exhibit these. The king addresses the Aten.

'Thou restest in the western horizon of heaven,
And the land is in darkness like the dead.
They lie in their houses, their heads are covered,
Their breath is shut up, and eye sees not to eye. . . .
Every lion cometh forth from his den,
And all the serpents then bite;
The night shines with its lights,
The land lies in silence;

For he who made them is in his horizon.
The land brightens, for thou risest in the horizon,
Shining as the Aten in the day.
The darkness flees, for thou givest thy beams.
Both lands are rejoicing every day.
Men awake and stand upon their feet,
For thou liftest them up ;
They bathe their limbs, they clothe themselves,
They lift their hands in adoration of thy rising,
Throughout the land they do their labours.
The cattle all rest in their pastures,
Where grow the trees and herbs ;
The birds fly in their haunts,
Their wings adoring thy *Ka*.
All the flocks leap upon their feet,
The small birds live when thou risest upon them.
The ships go forth, both north and south,
For every way opens at thy rising.
The fishes in the river swim up to greet thee ;
Thy beams are within the depth of the great sea.'

There are centuries in point of date between this and the great Nature-Psalm of the Jewish Psalter, but the spirit of both is the same.

Meanwhile events had been moving with great rapidity in the northern portion of the Empire which Tahutmes III. had founded, and the movement had been steadily unfavourable to the Egyptian cause. We saw in the last chapter how already, in the latter part of the reign of Amenhotep III., the shadow of the advancing Hittite power had begun to fall dark across the frontiers of the Empire. For a time after Akhenaten's accession there was nothing to indicate that the new power meditated any active aggression. Several of the earlier letters of the Amarna series are from the Hittite king, professing devotion, sending presents, and desiring alliance. But so soon as it became apparent that the throne of Egypt was no longer occupied by a great soldier, but by an amiable visionary, the pretence of friendship was thrown off, and

THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE IN ASIA.

the Hittites began to make incursions on the northern borders of the Egyptian dominions. In these they were helped by one Abdashirta and his son Aziru, who were Egyptian vassals, but now found it convenient to turn against their suzerain. Aziru especially figures as the Machiavelli of the Amarna correspondence, and the secret instigator of all the movements against Egypt. While

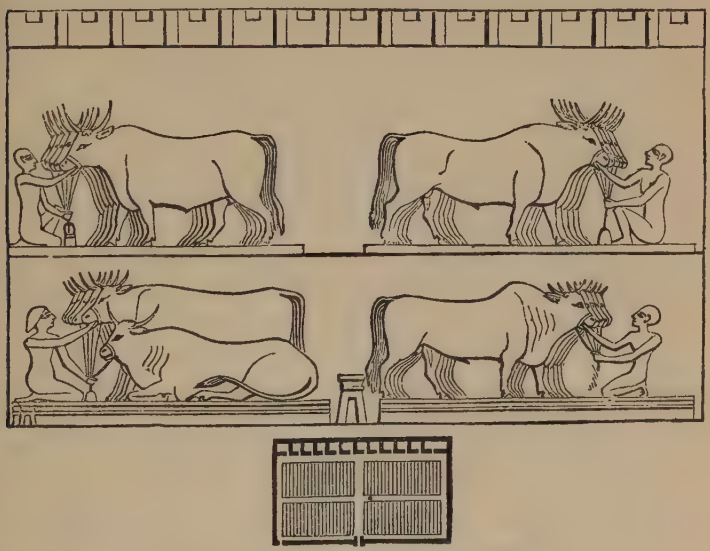


FIG. 24.—STOCK-YARD, TELL-EL-AMARNA.

the Hittites moved down from the north, he, with his Amorites, whether in co-operation with the Hittite advance, or independently, was attacking and taking city after city belonging to Egypt on the coast-line; and between the two attacking powers Egyptian prestige speedily began to wane. At first the Amarna letters give evidence that a number of the vassal kings were, or at least wished to be thought, loyal to Egypt; but as time went on, and the invaders grew bolder, and the faithful vassals saw that

Egypt was either unable or unwilling to help her servants, the strain became too much for their loyalty, and they went over, one by one, into rebellion, in order either to share in the plunder, or to save themselves from the fate which seemed to be imminent. One or two, however, still remained faithful, and it is from the letters of two of these Abdiels, Ribaddi, governor of Beyrut and Byblos, and Abi-milki, governor of Tyre, that we get the best idea of how the northern part of the Empire gradually fell to pieces while Akhenaten was writing hymns in his new capital.

In his earlier letters, Ribaddi, while realizing to the full the gravity of the situation, is yet not unhopeful that a successful resistance may be made. If troops are sent, the rebel chiefs Abdashirta and Aziru may be captured, though, if this advice be not taken, the land will fall to the rebels. Even the Egyptian officer Pakhura, who was already in the land, might do something if he occupied Amor, Aziru's own territory, and thus created a diversion. Later on, as city after city begins to fall into the hands of the invaders, his tone becomes more gloomy. But even when they have ventured to attack so important a town as Simyra, he is still hopeful that head may be made against them. 'Tsumura' (Simyra), he says, 'is like a bird in a snare; let the king look to it. If ships come from Egypt, they will not fear Abdashirta.' But troops and ships were the last things Akhenaten dreamed of meddling with; and besides, Ribaddi's earnest appeals were being read along with counter-statements from Abdashirta, and especially from Aziru, in which these worthies protest their loyalty in most convincing tones, and explain that their military operations are all in defence of the Empire against those wicked Hittites. Some of Aziru's wiles are ingenious and entertaining, and show him to have been a very plausible rascal.

Stirred up to unusual activity, Akhenaten appears to have sent an envoy, Khani, to him shortly after Simyra had fallen into his hands, to inquire into the meaning of his behaviour, and to request the rebuilding of the captured town. Aziru evades a meeting with the Egyptian envoy, and then, with the most sublime impudence, writes to the king that the reason he had missed Khani was because he was at Tunip, preparing the defence of that city against the Hittites. Meanwhile the poor perplexed king was receiving from the town of Tunip, over whose

FIG. 25.—HARPER AND CHORISTERS, TELL-EL-AMARNA.

safety Aziru was so anxious, a message like this: 'People of Tunip to the King. Who could formerly have plundered Tunip without being plundered by Manakhbiria? [Menkheper-ra = Tahutmes III.]. The gods of Egypt dwell in Tunip. But we now belong no more to Egypt. For twenty years (on times) we have sent messengers, but they remain with the King. . . . Aziru will treat Tunip as he has treated Niy; and if we mourn, the King will also have to mourn. And when Aziru enters Tsumura he will do to us as he pleases, and the King will have to lament. And now Tunip, your city, weeps, and her tears are running, and there is no help for us. For twenty years we have been sending to our lord, the King, the King of Egypt;

but there has not come to us a word from our lord, not one.'* Akhenaten's inactivity lost him the Empire; but we can scarcely wonder if he was at his wit's end to know what was the truth about the state of affairs, when dispatches like these, each flatly contradicting the other, were coming in. Even his own residents, who were on the spot, seem to have been quite bewildered, and unable to distinguish which vassals were loyal and which disloyal. Pakhura, the Egyptian officer already alluded to, so far mistook the position of affairs that he sent his mercenary troops against the faithful Ribaddi, thinking him a rebel, and slew the Sherden garrison on which the sorely bested governor was relying for his security. In this extremity Ribaddi finds that his own city of Byblos, enraged at Pakhura's stupid blunder, is beginning to grow restive. Gradually his situation becomes worse and worse. Of all his territory, nothing is left to him but the two towns, Byblos and Beyrut. For three years he has been defending himself, he says; now he has no grain left, and famine threatens, though everything has been sold to procure supplies. His own brother turns against him, and seeks to deliver up the town; and, for himself, old age and disease are pressing upon him. 'Let not the king neglect his city, for there is much silver and gold in it, and property in the temples.' Then the sorely pressed man escapes from Byblos to Beyrut, possibly in the hope of gathering supplies there for the defence of his town. But Beyrut proves a broken reed, for it also is attacked, and falls to Abdashirta and his sons, and Ribaddi has to flee back again to Byblos.

From thence we have his last despairing letters, in which, together with the accent of fear for the future, it is possible to catch that of anger at the abandonment of a town which has been loyal to the last. 'If the king

* Petrie, 'Syria and Egypt,' p. 88.

does not send troops, Byblos will fall into Abdashirta's hands, and all the king's lands as far as Egypt will fall into the hands of the Khabiri. Behold, Byblos is not like other towns, Byblos is the faithful city.' His record closes with a short letter, not addressed to the king, but to some official who had held out delusive promises of help. 'Why was Ribaddi told to send messengers to receive men and chariots from Egypt? He did so, but the messenger returned alone. And Beyrut has fallen to the Khabiri, though troops were there. And the enemy do not depart from the gate of Byblos. . . .' That sombre sentence is poor Ribaddi's last word. What befell him is unknown, but probably he was slain in the capture of his city—a man who deserved a better fate, but whose fortune it was to be too loyal to a fated cause. In a sense, his devotion is a tribute to Egypt's success as a ruling nation. 'The Egyptian yoke,' as Petrie observes, 'cannot have been very oppressive to Syria, when a native would be thus faithful in the face of the greatest discouragement and opposition.'

The letters of Abi-milki of Tyre tell the same story. He is attacked by a faithless vassal of Egypt, Zimrida of Sidon, and pleads in vain for a small contingent of troops to help him. His plight, in his island city, quickly becomes deplorable. There is no wood, no water, not even ground in which to bury the dead. It is perhaps little to be wondered at that in such circumstances his loyalty did not prove to be of quite so tough a fibre as Ribaddi's, and that he appears finally to have gone over to the enemy.

The chief source of information as to Southern Syria is the series of letters from Abd-Khiba, the governor of Jerusalem, which town appears to have been the capital of South Palestine at this time. He has to deal with much the same state of affairs as that which confronted Ribaddi in the north. Just as, under the shadow of the Hittite advance, Aziru and his relatives revolted and fought for

their own hand, so, in the south, various towns rebel, and call in the Khabiri, a military race of Aramæans, to aid them against the loyal subjects.* Abd-Khiba's letters tell the same melancholy tale of disaffection among the Syrian vassals and supineness on the part of Egypt. 'So long,' he says, 'as ships were on the sea [*i.e.*, so long as Egypt had a 'fleet in being'], the king occupied the land of Naharina and the land of Kash. Now the Khabiri occupy the cities. Not one prince remains, all are ruined. . . . If no troops come in this year, the whole territory of my lord the king will perish. . . . If there are no troops in this year, let the king send his officer to fetch me and my brothers, that we may die with our Lord the King.' A touch of vividness and reality is given to Abd-Khiba's letters by his frequent postscripts addressed to the scribe who translated the cuneiform correspondence of the Egyptian court. 'To the scribe of my Lord the King. Bring aloud before my Lord the King the words, "The whole territory of my Lord the King is going to ruin."' Abd-Khiba may have been a faithful servant, but he was evidently very imperfectly acquainted with the ways of officialdom; and doubtless Akhenaten heard just what his officials desired him to hear of his loyal subject's complaints.

Thus from this ancient foreign office correspondence it is possible to trace the manner in which the great Empire of Tahutmes III. crumbled to pieces during a single short reign. Within eighteen years few of the conquests of the great soldier were left to Egypt, and the warlike kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty had practically to begin at the beginning again, while even their utmost efforts never succeeded in regaining more than a fraction of what had been so lightly lost.

In spite of the purity of his religious conceptions and

* For discussion of the Khabiri and the Exodus question see Chapter XVIII.

the single-hearted zeal with which he forwarded them, or, rather, perhaps, because of these, the reign of the heretic king was thus a distinct misfortune to Egypt. The latter years of Akhenaten's short life must have been clouded by the sense that, after all, his work had been a failure. The army, which he had never used, though the circumstances of his time clamoured for its employment, must have been disaffected and aggrieved as the soldiers saw the conquests for which their fathers had bled snatched away with impunity, while they were not allowed to lift a finger to save them. The great bulk of the powerful priestly class must have found infinite opportunity to intrigue against 'that criminal of Akhet-aten,' as they called him, and to point the moral of their diatribes with the sad story of the misfortunes which were overtaking Egypt now that her ancient gods had been deposed; while the majority of the people, who cared very much neither for the one party nor the other, must have been conscious that somehow things were going ill. To add to the king's perplexities, while he had six daughters, he had no son to succeed him. He had, indeed, married some of his daughters to powerful nobles, and towards the end of his reign he associated with himself on the throne the husband of Meryt-aten, his eldest daughter, a noble named Smenkhkara. Still, at the best, the prospect cannot have been encouraging, and we need not wonder that the load of care broke down a frame which was probably constitutionally feeble, and that Akhenaten died, after a reign of less than eighteen years, at the early age of thirty-five (1365 B.C.).*

He has been called 'the most remarkable figure in earlier Oriental history,' and in a sense the title is deserved. The mind which could rise to the religious conceptions which he embraced as his faith, and could frame the resolution of imposing these upon the ancient fabric of Egyptian civilization, and carry it out in the face of such opposition

* *See note on p.* 193.

as may be imagined from a proud and powerful priesthood—such a mind can have been cast in no common mould. 'Among the Hebrews, seven or eight hundred years later,' says Breasted, 'we look for such men; but the modern world has yet adequately to value or even acquaint itself with this man, who in an age so remote and under conditions so adverse became the world's first idealist, and the world's first individual.' Yet something must be conceded to the other side. Ribaddi of Byblos and Abd-Khiba of Jerusalem held probably a very different opinion of the king who left them to perish; and not even devotion to the highest ideals can altogether atone for Akhenaten's neglect of a king's first duty—the defence of his faithful subjects. On the whole Akhenaten was a man born out of due time—an interesting, but at the same time a pathetic and a fatal figure. As a saint he might have attained eminence, as a king he was utterly misplaced.

His successor, Smenkhkara, enjoyed only a brief lease of power, and practically nothing is known of his reign. In turn he was succeeded by Tutankhaten (Living Image of Aten), who had married Akhenaten's third daughter Ankh-s-en-pa-aten (Her Life is from the Aten). Tutankhaten endeavoured for a while to maintain the tradition of the Aten worship; but after a few years he was forced, first to change the seat of the court from Akhet-aten back to Thebes, and then gradually to make further concessions to the ancient faith by restoring the name of Amen on the monuments from which it had been hammered, and by reopening the temples which had been closed. Finally, he was obliged to complete his apostasy by changing his own name and that of his wife, inserting the title of Amen in place of that of the Aten. He thus became Tutankhamen (Living Image of Amen), while his wife, the heretic's own daughter, was now Ankh-s-en-amen (Her

Life is from Amen). So little effect had Akhenaten's reformation really produced, and so early were its traces destined to pass away!*

Once the court left Akhet-aten, the destiny of the new town was of course sealed. It maintained itself for a few years by means of the manufactures of enamel and coloured glass which its founder had established. But these quickly fell away, and soon nothing remained of 'The Horizon of the Solar Disc' but the heaps of ruins from which in our own times have been disinterred the relics which tell of Akhenaten's splendours, and the dispatches which tell of his Empire's ruin.

Tutankhamen seems to have made some attempt to regain a little of the old ascendancy in Syria; but no details are known of an effort which can scarcely have been very successful. The great Eighteenth Dynasty dribbled miserably to a close in the person of the Divine Father Ay, an individual who had been a favourite in the court at Tell-el-Amarna, and had married Ty, the nurse of Akhenaten. Hor-em-heb, the restorer, whose firm hand brought order out of the chaos into which Egypt had fallen, nominally ranks as the last king of the dynasty; but, whatever may have been his claims to affinity with the degenerate race of the Amenhoteps and Tahutmeses, his true place is in the front of the new period, when Egypt began again to lift her fallen head, and to gird herself for one more effort to maintain her imperial position.

* The failure was scarcely so complete. See reference to subject in Chapter XVIII.

*Note to p.* 191.—From examination of his mummy, discovered by Davis and Ayrton in the tomb of his mother, Queen Tyi, Professor Elliot Smith believes him to have died at the age of twenty-six. In this case, he cannot have been more than ten years old when he came to the throne, and the earlier part of his policy must have been controlled by someone more mature.

## CHAPTER X

### HOR-EM-HEB AND THE RECONSTRUCTION

We have thus seen how the reforms of Akhenaten, never solidly rooted in the convictions of the nation, were speedily swept away when once their author was gone, and had really produced no lasting effect save the dismemberment of the northern portion of the Empire. There now ensued a period when the old worship of Amen reasserted itself with new force and exultation, and when the task of striving to weld together the scattered fragments of the Empire which Akhenaten's inaction had dissipated fell to the hands of the new king who now succeeded the Divine Father Ay.

During the reigns of the ephemeral kings who followed Akhenaten, the power of one man had been steadily growing. This was the general Hor-em-heb. In a time when slackness and inefficiency were apparently the rule in Egyptian administration he had distinguished himself by his fidelity and success in the commissions which were entrusted to him, whether in the comparatively humble function of watching over the welfare of those distressed loyalists who had been driven down into Egypt by the storm of rebellion in Syria, in the more important duties which devolved upon him as superintendent of the tribute-collection in the south, or in the position of commander-in-chief of the army. The feeble kings who succeeded Akhenaten must have leaned more and more upon this

strong man, for we find that in his hands there was gradually accumulating all the real governing power of the country. Among the titles which he claims for himself before his accession to the throne are these: He was 'chosen to regulate both lands, and hearer of trials alone—chief above the chiefs, great above the great, keeper of the palace, prince in the land to its limits, chief general, great chief of the people, and Heir.' On his statue at Turin he claims that his father, the god Horus, 'stood behind him, forming and protecting him . . . knowing the days of his peace to give to him his kingdom. . . . He placed him at the head of the land to secure the laws of the two lands, as Heir of the whole land. He was alone without a rival, and the ways of the people were according to his command . . . . Behold, he was governing both lands for many years, the controllers reported to him in obeisance at the gates of the palace, the chiefs of the Nine Bows (foreign tribes), both south and north, came before him with their arms stretched out, they adored his face like a god. What was done was done by his command. . . . He was truly the father of both lands.'*

The man of whom all this was true was evidently king in fact, whoever may have been king in name; and while we do not know how the reign of Ay was brought to a close—whether by the natural death of the king, or by a *coup d'état* on the part of this powerful Mayor of the Palace—it is more than likely, judging from the account on the Turin statue, that the latter was the case, and that, after having tolerated a nominal master until he felt himself sufficiently strong, Hor-em-heb brushed aside the feeble Ay, and grasped that royal state of which he already held the substance. His own record discreetly ascribes his elevation to the direct interposition of the god of his native town and the recognition of Amen-Ra. 'Behold,'

* Petrie, 'History,' ii. 248, 249.

he says, 'this noble god Horus, lord of Hat-suten [Alabastronpolis, the city of Hor-em-heb's forefathers], desired in his heart to establish his son upon his throne of eternity. Horus proceeded in rejoicing to Thebes, the city of the eternal lord, with his son in his embrace, even to Karnak, until he came into the presence of Amen, in order to give to him his office as king.' The inscription then states that Amen, whose feast-day it was, met him with rejoicing, and conveyed him to the royal palace, where 'his great and noble daughter [the princess Nezem-mut, sister of Akhenaten's wife Nefertiti] made obeisance to him.' This reads very like a euphemistic account of a revolution, in which the priests of Amen took advantage of the great feast-day of their god to establish their favourite upon the throne. Having thus grasped the sceptre, Hor-em-heb regularized his position, according to custom, by marrying Nezem-mut, who, though now well past middle age, was of true royal blood, and was thus able to confer a clear title to the throne upon her husband.

Whatever were the means by which the new king succeeded in gaining his position, he speedily showed himself to be the man whom the times required. Of course, it was necessary for him first of all to satisfy the expectations of the priesthood, by whose help he had risen. Accordingly, the earlier part of his reign was spent in restoring the temples and the images of the gods which had suffered in the time of Akhenaten, and in making provision for the re-establishment of the ancient worship. 'He restored the temples of the gods from the region of the papyrus swamps in the Delta to Nubia. . . . The Sun-god Ra rejoiced to see his shrines, which had been desolate for a long time, made to flourish again, and where formerly there had been one statue there were now a hundred.'* The arrangements for the daily offerings were

* Budge, 'History of Egypt,' iv. 152

1. PLYON OF HOR-EM-HEB, THEBES.
2. DETAIL FROM TOMB OF SETY I., VALLEY OF THE KINGS, THEBES.

once more set up; the temples were provided with costly vessels of gold and silver; priests, acolytes, and temple-servants were assigned to each shrine, and flocks and lands were made over for their endowment. Thus the old gods, and especially Amen, came to their own once more after their season of eclipse, and were doubtless more powerful than ever by reason of the failure of the attempt to supersede them.

Along with the work of restoration went that of demolition. The measure which Akhenaten had meted to Amen and the other gods was measured again to his own divinity. Everywhere the worship of the Aten was frowned upon. At Thebes the great shrine which had been built by Akhenaten was destroyed, and its materials were used for the two great pylons which Hor-em-heb added to the glories of the Amen temple at Karnak. Akhenaten's personal memory received no greater respect than was accorded to his god. His name was hacked out of all inscriptions, even out of his own tomb; while an attempt was made to ignore his reign by never referring to him save as 'that criminal of Akhetaten.'

But Hor-em-heb found also other, and more worthy, work to do than this wretched wreaking of useless vengeance upon the memory of a dead man. During the succession of weak reigns with which the land had been cursed, the usual abuses characteristic of such times had crept into the administration. That ancient grievance of the East, the corruption and oppression of the tax-gatherers, had become intolerable. Tahutmes III., thorough in this as in everything else, had endeavoured in his time to abate the grievance; but now it had become worse than ever. The very inspectors who were set over the tax-gatherers were sharers in the profits of their oppression. 'The officers put in charge also went to

the officials, saying, "Give us the product of the fraudulent inspection."'

Hor-em-heb wisely did not leave the investigation of these abuses to the men whose interest it was to maintain them, but went on a personal tour of inspection, and saw with his own eyes what was going on. As the result of his investigations, he drew up a stringent set of regulations which still survives. Apparently one of the chief sources of mischief was the lawless behaviour of the soldiers of the standing army. Their time of inactivity had, as usual in such cases, corrupted them; and they were going up and down the country plundering the poor working folks, seizing the goods of honest people, against whom there was no claim, in the name of the State—a favourite form of robbery being the taking of the hides which were accepted as payment in kind. Upon such conduct the justice of Hor-em-heb came down sharply and heavily. 'As for any citizen of the army concerning whom one shall hear saying: "He goeth about stealing hides"; beginning with this day [*i.e.*, from the date of this enactment], the law shall be executed against him by beating him with a hundred blows, opening five wounds, and taking away the hides which he took.'* Again, in a case where a poor man, apparently a camp-follower, had been robbed of the cargo of his boat because he could not pay double duties, the king decreed that the guilty official should be punished by having his nose cut off and being banished to the frontier fort of Zaru, on the edge of the Eastern desert—a sentence doubtless equivalent to Siberian exile.

In the East, however, a great source of oppression and injustice has always been the tendency to corruption among the judges themselves. In order to guard against this, Hor-em-heb enacted that bribery, if proved against

* Breasted, 'History of Egypt,' pp. 404-406.

any judge, should be accounted a capital offence. 'Now as for any official or any priest concerning whom it shall be heard, saying: "He sits to execute judgment among the council appointed for judgment, and he commits a crime against justice therein"; it shall be counted against him as a capital crime.' No doubt the theory of Hor-em-heb's enactments would be found to be better than the practice, and corrupt officials would find ways and means of corruption even at the risk of losing their noses or their lives; but at least the intention was good, and the spirit of the king's laws shows him to have been a just and enlightened ruler. One is reminded of the rough-and-ready, but effective, justice of Frederick the Great; and the prompt vengeance taken on the oppressor of the poor sutler, together with the decree as to the corrupt judges, suggests reminiscences of 'Miller Arnold's Lawsuit.'

Although a soldier by profession, Hor-em-heb does not appear to have spent much of his time in war. The fact was that Egypt was not yet prepared to strike. The time was coming when, under the vigorous rulers of the Nineteenth Dynasty, she would make another bold bid for the Empire of the East; and that she was able to do so much as she then did was due to the wise and healing policy of Hor-em-heb. Meanwhile the need was not for conquest, but for peace and the re-establishment of security and confidence. The events of the past generation must have given a severe shock to the national stability, not alone materially, but also morally. The very foundations of the people's belief, alike in their gods and in their own imperial destiny, must have been rudely shaken by Akhenaten's reforms, and by the disasters in Syria. Indeed, Egypt never altogether regained what she had lost in those fatal years; but at least Hor-em-heb laid the foundation on which men like Sety I. and Ramses II. were able to raise the fabric of an Empire which, if not

so great as that which had been lost, was not altogether unworthy of the ancient glories of the land.

In his earlier days the king had seen service in Syria, though under what king is not known, for the inscription on the tomb which he had begun at Memphis before his accession states that he was the 'companion of his master on the field of battle that day he overthrew the Sati.' The inscription at Karnak, in which he mentions conquests over many nations, including the Hittites, may refer to these early warlike feats, or may be merely a conventional assertion of military glory. There are no traces of any other Syrian wars. A Nubian expedition appears to have taken place, and is commemorated at Silsileh; but it is not certain whether this may not also have been an event of his earlier days. He also sent ships to Punt, reviving the custom of the greater kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty. But altogether the reign, the length of which is very uncertain,* was a time of consolidation and reconstruction, during which Egypt had neither the desire nor the power for foreign expansion.

Considering the state in which he found the land, the remains of Hor-em-heb's public works are considerable. At Karnak, as already mentioned, he built two pylons, using for them the materials of the shrine of Aten. The blocks thus converted to the service of another god still bear fragments of prayers addressed to the Disc, with scenes of worship, and cartouches of Akhenaten, Tutankhamen, and Ay. In addition to these works he set up an avenue of sphinxes between his pylons and the temple of Mut. The sphinxes are lion-bodied and ram-headed, and are considered to be the finest at Thebes. At Deir-el-Bahri, Medinet Habu, and elsewhere, he appears to have carried out extensive restorations, while at Silsileh he excavated a rock-temple, on whose walls are the scenes of the Nubian war referred to above. But the real monu-

* Perhaps twenty-two years.

ment of Hor-em-heb's reign was a reunited and reinvigorated Egypt, ready once more to take her true place as foremost among the great nations of the ancient world. We are best able to measure the amount of his accomplishment by the fact that, within two years of his death, the Egypt which had sat tamely inactive while all the conquests of Tahutmes III. were being stripped from her is found sending forth a conquering army under Sety I. to the very slopes of the Lebanon.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE STRUGGLE FOR SYRIA—SETY I. AND RAMSES II.

The reign of Hor-em-heb forms the link between the two periods of the Egyptian Empire, and between the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, the last of the great dynasties of Egypt. Hor-em-heb is not known to have left any family, and on his death the throne was occupied by the founder of a new line.

Who Ramses I. (1328-1326 B.C.) was, what he had previously been, or how he succeeded in establishing himself upon the throne, are matters not known. Obviously, however, he must have been a man of high position and great influence; and if, as has been suggested, his wife Sitra was a royal princess of the Eighteenth Dynasty, he would have a legal claim to the crown. Ramses must have been an elderly man at the time of his accession, and his reign was short, the highest known date being of his second year.

He had, therefore, no time to accomplish anything of importance. He planned and began the great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, the vastest of all Egyptian temple buildings; but he only erected the pylon and one of the pillars, and it was left for his son Sety I. to carry out the main body of the work, and for his grandson Ramses II. to complete it. His name is mentioned on the Wady Halfa stele as conqueror of the Nubians; but it is more than likely that the real chief of the expedition referred to was

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF SETY I., ZARU.

Sety, whose name also appears in the inscription. It is possible that to his reign may be referred the first treaty with the Hittites, to which reference is made in the famous treaty of Ramses II.; but more probably this early treaty with Saplulu was made in the reign of Horem-heb. Towards the end of his reign Ramses associated his son Sety with himself in a co-regency which only lasted a few months.

The first task of the young Pharaoh (1326-1300 B.C.), one of the most vigorous of later Egyptian monarchs, was the Nubian expedition referred to above. On his return from it, being now sole sovereign, he must have made rapid preparation for a much more important undertaking—no less than an attempt to regain for Egypt the provinces which she had lost in the latter years of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Before the close of his first year his plans were fully laid and his arrangements for transport and commissariat completed, and the king marched out from Zaru to follow in the footsteps of Tahutmes III. How much had been lost to Egypt in the years that had come between we can estimate from the fact that he had to fight his way right up through Palestine. He met and defeated the Shasu or Bedawyn in the Negeb, or South Country, of Palestine. Marching northwards through the land, he turned east through Galilee, crossed the Jordan, and ravaged the Hauran, where he set up a tablet of victory; he then turned again north-westwards and captured the town of Yenoam, on the southern slopes of the Lebanon. This appears to have been the northern limit of the campaign of his first year; and at a spot which may have been near the waters of Merom the victorious Pharaoh had the satisfaction of receiving the submission of the chiefs of the Lebanon. He took advantage of their presence to requisition a supply of great cedar logs for the bark of Amen and the flag-staves of the temple at Karnak.

Sety now collected his northern captives and spoil, and prepared for the return march to Egypt. On his way he picked up the captives of his earlier conquests in the south, and, marching by the coast-line, reached Zaru in safety and triumph. His return was witnessed by a gathering of the great men of the land, bearing flowers for the conquering Pharaoh, who had thus begun to restore the glories of the past. As the king's chariot drove up, with the miserable prisoners before it, their arms bound in all sorts of contorted and painful attitudes, the crowd at the bridge-head over the frontier canal broke forth in praises. 'The priests, the ancients, the nobles of the south and the north say, in adoring His Majesty and exalting his prowess, "Thou art come from the lands . . thy falchion is on the head of all lands, and their chiefs have fallen by thy sword"' (Plate XVII.). The triumphal entry at Zaru was followed by celebrations at Thebes, when Sety presented his captives to the Theban triad of gods, Amen, Mut, and Khonsu, and offered a portion of his booty in the shape of magnificent vessels of gold and silver. The triumph was closed with the sacrifice, perhaps merely symbolical, of a number of the captives. Thus Egypt had once more assumed the rôle of a conquering power. The amount of Sety's achievement was not so very great; but it bore witness to the new spirit which was rising up in the nation, and was the promise of greater things to come.

This campaign was, of course, only the preliminary to further invasions of Syria. But before Sety could venture upon another northern campaign, there was a call for his presence on the western side of the Delta. Here the Libyan tribes, always more or less turbulent neighbours, had apparently taken advantage of Egypt's time of weakness to invade her territory and establish themselves in possession. Sety met them in battle, and conquered them for

the time being; but of the details of the campaign nothing is known. Having disposed of this danger at his own door, he turned his attention anew to the great project of the conquest of Syria.

In his second campaign, Sety directed his force upon the kingdom of Amor, or of the Amorites. Egypt's old enemies, Abdashirta and Aziru, had, of course, long since passed away; but the manes of Ribaddi were not left unappeased. Amor was devastated, and its chief town, Qedesh in Galilee (to be distinguished from Qedesh on the Orontes), was assaulted and captured. From Amor, Sety advanced upon what must from the beginning have been his grand objective—the land of the Hittites Unfortunately, we have no record of where or how the armies of the two great powers met in conflict. We only know that Sety claimed to have gained a victory over his enemy, and that his reliefs at Karnak show him driving the Hittite chariotry in headlong flight before him, and leading crowds of captive Hittites and captured chariots in triumph. Indeed, it is possible that the Egyptian victory was not nearly so complete as the reliefs would lead us to imagine. It cannot be supposed that Sety intended at first to relinquish all his efforts in Syria after two campaigns, and it would be ridiculous to believe that what cost Tahutmes III. a war of seventeen campaigns was accomplished by Sety, against a strong enemy like the Hittites, in one. It is probable that the Egyptian king found his victory, whatever its scale, to have been but a barren success, and realized that it was impossible for him, at the end of a lengthy line of communications, to hope to maintain the struggle against a powerful enemy, fighting, so to speak, on his own doorstep. At all events, there is no trace of any further war in Syria, and we know from the statements in the Treaty of Ramses II. that about this time a second treaty of peace was made between the Egyptians

and the Hittites. In his two campaigns, however, Sety's accomplishment had been considerable. In his lists of conquests he claims towns which would lead us to infer that the recovered Egyptian Empire extended practically as far north as in its palmiest days; but when we remember where his son met the Hittites within a few years, it is scarcely possible to believe that these lists represent the actual fact. The whole of Palestine, however, both south and north, was, at the very least, regained by Egypt, together with Tyre, the Phœnician coast, and probably the southern part of the Lebanon. When one remembers the state of depression out of which Egypt had so lately risen, and the strength of the enemy against whom Sety had to contend, it will be seen that even this modified estimate of his success represents a very creditable achievement.

Of the remainder of Sety's reign comparatively little is known. The only dated records do not go beyond the ninth year, though it is probable that the reign extended to at least twenty years. But the manner in which the king employed his time, after he had once learned that it was useless to dream of reviving the great ambitions of the conquering period of the Empire, is not uncertain; for no monarch has left more remarkable examples of sacred architecture, and the works for which Sety gave command, and whose execution he supervised, remain by far the best specimens extant of later Egyptian work.

In mere mass of accomplishment as a builder his son Ramses II. far surpassed him, but in quality Sety's works are beyond comparison finer. A good deal of his time had still to be devoted to the restorations which Hor-em-heb had begun and Ramses I., in his short reign, had not been able to complete; and in this work he shows good taste and sense, and a pious regard for the honour of his predecessors. When Ramses II. laid hands upon a building, it was not to complete another's work and give the

glory to the man who really deserved it; it was to steal the work of better men than himself, and to batter his own eternal cartouche in upon their inscriptions, regardless of the truth. The most valuable records have been ruthlessly falsified by being appropriated to the vainglory of that sublime egoist. Sety's restorations were modest and honourable. His sculptors, in restoring inscriptions, carefully followed the original text, and the only addition which he allowed himself to make was a single line, never interfering with the original—'Restoration of the monument, which Sety I. made.'

He did not confine himself to restoration, however. At Karnak he took up the vast plan which had been begun, but only begun, by his father, and the bulk of the work of the great Hypostyle Hall is due to him. He finished the double row of great columns in the central avenue (Frontispiece), and the whole northern half of the hall; and while the southern columns are sculptured by Ramses II., it is not unlikely that they were erected by Sety. This enormous hall, the greatest single chamber which the Egyptians ever reared, would of itself suffice to make the name of Sety memorable; and though opinions differ widely as to its artistic merit, it still remains perhaps the most imposing building in the world.

On the north wall of this great structure Sety sculptured in relief the story of his wars against the Shasu, the Libyans, and the Hittites, and the great series of pictures, over 200 feet in length, is still, though somewhat mutilated, the finest set of battle-reliefs in existence. The pictures carry us right through his campaigns. We see the Shasu, with their short jerkins and battle-axes, fleeing before the conquering Pharaoh, and the Retennu (Upper Syrians) hiding in their forests. In the Libyan war-scenes, Sety is seen piercing with his spear a Libyan chief, whose limbs relax and whose head drops back as he falls in the death-

agony, or whirling onward in his chariot, his falchion brandished over the head of the only chief who has dared to withstand his onset (Plate XVIII.). Again he spreads devastation through the land of Amor, and presses his attack up to the walls of Qedesh in Galilee, the herdsmen driving away their cattle in terror at the approach of this devouring scourge; or he turns northward towards the Lebanon, and scatters before him the chariots of the Hittites. The character of the work is unequal, as was to be expected in such an extent of scenes; but the vivacity and movement of some of the pictures is admirable, and the series is only excelled, among later Egyptian work, by the still more celebrated reliefs of the same king at Abydos.

Here, with that piety and regard for the past which characterized him, and which marked him out so strongly from his son and successor, Sety reared a great temple to the Osirian triad, Osiris, Isis, and Horus, and to the memory of the early kings of Egypt, particularly those of the First and Second Dynasties. The ruins of the temple are still imposing; but it is the relief-work upon the walls which has chiefly given to Abydos its great reputation—a reputation which is thoroughly deserved. We shall have to return to these, the most remarkable pieces of artistic work left by the Nineteenth Dynasty (Plate XXIV.). On the walls of this temple was also engraved that list of the kings of Egypt whose value as an historical authority is still high (Plate II.).

At Thebes, Sety also carried on the mortuary temple at Qurneh, begun by Ramses I. It was still incomplete at his death, and his son Ramses II. finished it, and in an economical spirit made it do duty for both Sety and Ramses I., converting to his own use the finer building which his father had begun for himself, and which is now known as the Ramesseum.

BATTLE RELIEF OF SETY I., KARNAK.

In addition to these great works, or perhaps because of them, we find this reign marked by a revival of the mining industry. At Serabit-el-Khadem a great stele of the reign still survives, while the last structural additions to the miners' temple of the Lady of Turquoise were made by Sety's orders. He also made provision for the more regular working of the gold-mines of Jebel Zubara, and the inscriptions of the temple at Redesieh give particulars of his work in this respect. Visiting the district himself, he became convinced of the hardships which attended the journey through the desert, and especially of the difficulty of obtaining water. 'When the king went up there with those acquainted with the watercourses . . . he said, "It is a place where travellers succumb to the parchings of their throats. Where is the place that they can quench their thirst? The country is distant, the region is vast. The man overtaken by thirst cries out, 'Land of perdition.'"'* Sety therefore caused a cistern or well to be dug, and obtained an abundant supply of water; he then secured the place for the future, so far as possible, by calling down dreadful curses on the head of anyone who should interfere with his works.

There is still extant a map of the gold-mines, showing valleys among the hills, with the openings of the mine galleries driven into the rocks, a cistern of water, and a memorial stele of King Sety. Rude in the extreme as is its execution, it has its own interest, as being absolutely the oldest map in the world. An attempt to gain a water-supply for the mines in the Wady Alaki was less successful. We learn from a record of Ramses II. that, though Sety bored to a depth of 120 cubits, he found no water, and it was left for his son to succeed where he had failed.

The tomb of Sety in the Valley of the Kings is one of the finest specimens of its type. Its galleries penetrate

* 'Records of the Past,' viii. 69.

into the solid rock to a depth of over 300 feet, and its chambers are adorned with painted reliefs in the best style of the period, representing scenes in the underworld and the passage of the solar bark through the hours of the night. Here the king was laid to rest, after his reign of more than twenty years, in the magnificent alabaster sarcophagus which now forms one of the treasures of the Soane Museum, London. The tomb was discovered by Belzoni in 1817, but the mummy of the king was missing. It had been removed, first in the Twentieth Dynasty to the tomb of Queen Anhapu, then about a century later it had been again shifted to the tomb of Amenhotep I.; finally, it had been bestowed in the hiding-place at Deir-el-Bahri, whence it was taken, in 1881, to Cairo, where it was unwrapped in 1886. The work of mummifying has been admirably done, and the features of Sety have been preserved through the centuries so perfectly that there is no difficulty in realizing the high-bred aristocratic type of one of the best of Egypt's later sovereigns. 'The expression of the face,' says Maspero, 'was that of one who had only a few hours previously breathed his last. Death had slightly drawn the nostrils and contracted the lips, the pressure of the bandages had flattened the nose a little, and the skin was darkened by the pitch; but a calm and gentle smile still played over the mouth, and the half-opened eyelids allowed a glimpse to be seen from under their lashes of an apparently moist and glistening line—the reflection from the white porcelain eyes let in to the orbit at the time of burial.'

Ramses II. (1300-1234 B.C.), who now succeeded his father, Sety, was not the eldest son, though, with that vanity which was the distinguishing mark of his character, he wished to be remembered as such. There had been one prince older than himself, who had had his figure inserted in one of Sety's battle-reliefs; but either he had died in

the interval, or else was thrust aside, on his father's death, by some palace intrigue, and no more is heard of him. Ramses carefully obliterated the traces of his elder brother's existence by having his own figure substituted for that of the former crown prince on the relief in question; and, in fact, the new king did everything in his power to impress upon the nation the idea that he had been destined to the throne from the first. 'From the time that I was in the egg,' he states in his inscription at Abydos, 'the great ones sniffed the earth before me; when I attained to the rank of eldest son and heir upon the throne of Seb, I dealt with affairs, I commanded as chief the foot-soldiers and the chariots. My father having appeared before the people, when I was but a very little boy in his arms, said to me: "I shall have him crowned king that I may see him in all his splendour, while I am still upon this earth." The nobles of the court having drawn near to place the double crown upon my head, "Place the diadem upon his forehead," said he.'* The great men of the court, who knew very differently, no doubt smiled behind their hands at this realistic recital of events which never happened; but they were politic enough to adopt the polite fiction, and their response was a credit to their powers of solemn make-believe.

Notwithstanding this little weakness, which may, of course, have been sound policy, Ramses showed himself to be a vigorous and able king, though dowered with a most inordinate vanity. The earlier years of his reign were unmarked by any event of importance. A Nubian expedition took place, which the king may have commanded in person; and it was possibly on his way home from this expedition that he gave orders for the excavation of the great rock-temple at Abu Simbel (Plate XX.), and was led to make arrangements for the completion of Sety's

* Maspero, 'The Struggle of the Nations,' p. 386.

temple at Abydos. This temple, he tells us, he found unfinished: the columns were not on their bases, and the statues lay upon the earth; the tombs of the earlier kings were likewise going to ruin, and their boundary walls were being broken down. Ramses issued instructions to have all this put to rights, and provided the temple with an ample endowment both for the execution of the works and for its regular maintenance. Returning to Thebes, he began the building of his own funerary temple, or, rather, he appropriated to himself the building which Sety had already begun for his own use, relegating his father's memory to the building at Qurneh, which had been designed for Ramses I.

It was in the second year of his reign that Ramses seriously turned his mind towards the project, which Sety had been forced to relinquish, of reasserting Egyptian dominance in Syria. The details of this campaign are unknown, but it is evident that he pushed northwards along the Syrian coast-line until he reached the Nahr-el-Kelb, or Dog River, just north of Beyrut. Here, on the rocks overlooking the river, he carved a stele, the first of three which he set up there, representing himself smiting a Syrian. This was probably, therefore, the limit of his advance on this occasion. Returning to Egypt, he took steps for the development of the gold-mines in the Wady Alaki. Reference has already been made to the ill-success of Sety in his attempt to obtain a water-supply there. Ramses had better fortune, for the cistern or well which he ordered to be dug reached water at a depth of only 12 cubits, and maintained a supply 4 cubits deep.

The fourth year found the king again on the coast of Syria, apparently to consolidate the results of his former expedition. He once more reached the Dog River, and set up a second stele. But his movements had evidently alarmed the Hittites, who felt that their position was

being seriously threatened by the Egyptian advance. The Hittite king, Mutallu,* saw that it was time to prepare for the inevitable struggle for North Syria, and set himself to establish a confederacy of tribes which might be sufficiently strong to resist the utmost efforts of the southern power. His alliance included a number of the ancient enemies of Egypt. At its head were the Hittites of Qedesh, who formed the backbone of the confederacy, while around their standard were gathered the men of Naharina, of Carchemish, of Arvad, of Qedi, and of several other less familiar powers. Recognizing the vital import-

FIG. 26.—HITTITE CHARIOTS—'THREE MEN ON A CAR.'

ance of the issue, the Hittite king spared no effort to gather a formidable army. 'He left neither gold nor silver in his land; he stripped it of all its treasures.' By such means he was able to assemble a motley host, amounting in number to at least 20,000 men. The main strength of his army lay in a brigade of 2,500 chariots—'three men on a car,' as against the Egyptian practice, in which the chariot only carried two; but in addition he had a solid body of 8,000 spearmen, with, no doubt, the usual contingents of light-armed troops.

Meanwhile Ramses had been mustering his forces to meet this formidable enemy, and in the spring of his fifth year he marched northwards at the head of an army which

* *See note on p. 234.*

probably numbered about 18,000 men. Its composition was not much more homogeneous than that of the Hittite host, for it included a body of heavy-armed Sherden or Sardinians, who from this time onwards formed a regular portion of every Egyptian army, besides the usual Libyan and Nubian mercenaries. Marching with considerable rapidity, the Egyptian force passed up the valley of the Dog River, and down that of the Orontes, and reached the neighbourhood of Qedesh, some 400 miles from their own frontier, within a month of their start. On the twenty-ninth day out, Ramses camped on the high land of Qedesh, the watershed in the valley between the two Lebanons, from which he could see the distant walls of the town of Qedesh, the objective of his long march. So far he seems to have met with no opposition, and, indeed, to have been somewhat puzzled by the absence of any trace of his enemy. It appeared as though the Hittites were about to abandon to him the great prize of the campaign without striking a blow.

Ramses now prepared to advance direct upon Qedesh, in the hope of an easy conquest. His army was formed in four divisions—the division of Amen, which led the van, and with which the king himself marched, the division of Ra, the division of Ptah, and the division of Sutekh. Leading the vanguard, he marched down to the ford of the Orontes at Shabtuna (Ribleh), and crossed the river, intending to advance upon Qedesh from the west. Now, for the first time, he got touch with the enemy, and secured what seemed reliable information. He fell in with two Shasu, who brought him very welcome intelligence. 'Our brethren,' they said, 'who are among the chiefs of the tribes who are in league with the abominable prince of Kheta, have made us come to His Majesty to say, "We are ready to render service to Pharaoh (life, health, strength!)," and they have broken with the abominable

prince of Kheta. Now the abominable prince of Kheta is encamped in the lands of Aleppo, to the north of the country of Tunip, and he is afraid to advance because of Pharaoh (life, health, strength!).'* On receiving such flattering information, Ramses concluded that Qedesh was as good as won, and pushed rapidly on with the division of Amen, while his other three divisions got gradually more and more strung out along the line of march. In his eagerness he even pressed on ahead of the vanguard, accompanied only by his household troops, and halted, shortly after noonday, on the north-west of Qedesh, within reach of what appeared to be an easy prey. The division of Amen came up, pitched camp, and set to work to prepare dinner, the other three divisions still straggling far behind—that of Ra somewhere between the ford of Shabtuna and Qedesh, that of Ptah close to the southern side of the ford, and that of Sutekh still further to the rear. The headlong carelessness of the march of Ramses contrasts very forcibly with the calculated daring of Tahutmes III. before the Battle of Megiddo.

In the meantime, 'the abominable prince of Kheta' had been preparing an artistic surprise for Ramses, which, properly carried out, should have resulted in the absolute destruction of the Egyptian army. Far from having retreated to Aleppo, he was actually, with his whole army, within easy striking distance of the unconscious Pharaoh. The Shasu had been sent by him for the express purpose of entertaining Ramses with false intelligence, and he must have watched with grim amusement the disorderly and hasty advance of the young king, which showed how well his bait had taken. As Ramses and his first division pressed northwards on the west side of Qedesh, the Hittite force edged southwards on the east side of the town, masking the movement behind its walls; and by the time

* Budge, 'Egyptian Reading-Book,' p. xl.

that Ramses had encamped, the army of Mutallu had secured the position coveted above all others by a commander, on the exposed flank of a marching enemy. Ramses was several miles from his nearest supports; and, as division after division came straggling up along the road, Mutallu had nothing to do but cross the river, an operation for which he had evidently provided beforehand, and charge home upon the flank of the helpless and weary

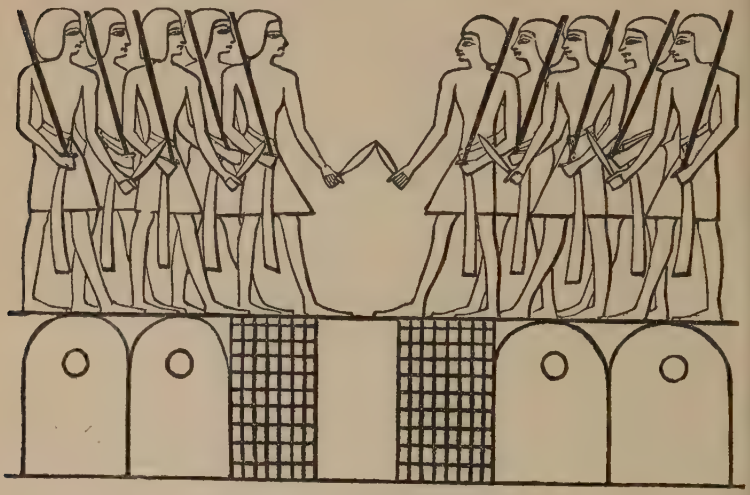


FIG. 27.—GUARD OF CAMP.

troops. Seldom has an army been in greater danger of absolute annihilation than was the Egyptian force at this time; and seldom has the danger been more thoroughly earned by the carelessness alike of its commander and its Intelligence Department. By all the laws of war Ramses and his troops should never have seen Egypt again. A fortunate accident, however, enabled the king to extricate himself from the desperate situation in which his rashness had placed him. Ramses' camp had barely been pitched when two of his scout-masters brought in two Hittite

spies whom they had captured, and who had evidently been sent out to bring to Mutallu the final information which would enable him to time his stroke. The

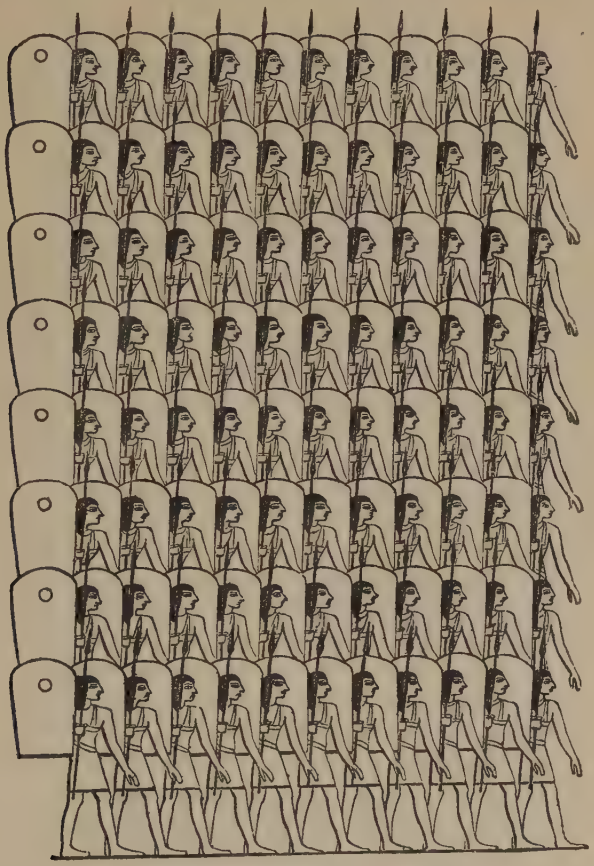


Fig. 28.—Infantry on March.

unfortunate men were put to the question by means of a sound beating, and made confession under the stick. 'His Majesty said to them, "Where is the abominable chief of the Kheta? Verily I have heard that he is in the country

of Aleppo." They replied, "Behold, the abominable chief of the Kheta standeth, and multitudes of the districts are with him; he hath brought them with him in vast numbers from all the provinces of the country of the Kheta, and from the country of Naharina, and from the whole country of Qedi. They are provided with footmen, and with cavalry fully equipped, and they are like the sand of the seashore for multitude; and, behold, they are drawn up in fighting order, but are concealed behind the abominable city of Qedesh." '*

On receiving this astounding intelligence, Pharaoh at once summoned his officers before him, gave them a most royal rating for the slackness with which their scouting had been conducted, and sent hurried orders to bring up the division of Ptah from the ford of Shabtuna. But even while his orders were being issued, the enemy had struck his first blow with complete success. The men of the division of Ra were marching on in absolute ignorance of the danger which awaited them, and no doubt pleased with the prospect of rest and food after their long and weary march. Suddenly they were struck, as if by a thunderbolt, by the charge of the whole Hittite chariot brigade, which Mutallu had quietly passed over the water at the south of Qedesh. 'Now, whilst His Sacred Majesty was sitting and talking with his officers, the abominable prince of the Kheta came, together with his footmen and cavalry and the multitudes of people who were with him, and they crossed over the canal at the south of Qedesh, and came upon the soldiers of His Majesty, who were marching along in ignorance of what was happening.' Taken in flank, tired, hungry, and absolutely unprepared, the Egyptian infantry was broken at the first shock, and rushed in utter rout for the only hope of safety, the encamped division of Amen. Almost as soon as the news

* Budge, 'Egyptian Reading-Book,' p. xli.

BATTLE OF QEDESH, RAMESSEUM.

of the disaster reached the king, the fugitives burst into his camp with the Hittite chariots hard upon their heels. The division of Amen was demoralized by this sudden flood of pursuers and pursued, and promptly took to flight also, leaving Ramses in a most unenviable position. Two of his divisions—and these probably the best troops of his army—were scattered to the winds; the third was miles south of him, and cut off from him by the victorious Hittite force; while the fourth division was so far away that the king never even sent orders to bring it up.

In this desperate strait, Ramses, who had failed so utterly as a general, showed that he had at least the courage of a good man-at-arms. Leaping into his chariot, he charged headlong upon the Hittite chariot brigade as it advanced, flushed with victory, and doubtless disordered by the pursuit. His own statement that he was 'all alone, no other with him,' must probably be taken as a rhetorical flight; but he can have had only the few household troops who had not been swept away in the rout of the two divisions. His boldness saved the situation. That happened which has happened on numberless fields to victorious cavalry, spent with the exertion of a long charge. The onslaught of the king and of his fresh household troops broke in turn the disordered Hittite ranks, and the enemy's chariot brigade was driven back upon the Orontes. Charging repeatedly, Ramses pressed his advantage, and the Hittite king, who was watching the fortunes of the combat from the eastern bank of the river, where he held in reserve a body of 8,000 spearmen, saw all his plans being upset and his chariotry being hurled into the water by the Pharaoh's desperate attack. Mutallu's own brother fell in the rout of the so lately victorious chariotry, together with many other chiefs, among them the shield-bearer of the Hittite king, and his 'writer of books,' or scribe, whose occupation might have kept him in a safer

place than the midst of a wild charge of chariots. One of the chief allies of the Hittites, the King of Aleppo, was with difficulty rescued from the river by the spearmen on

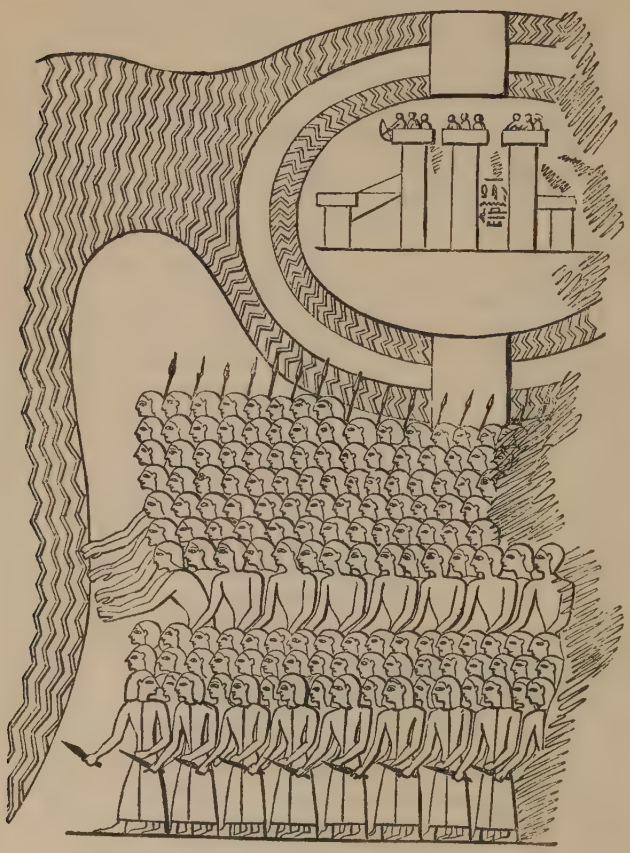


FIG. 29.—HITTITE INFANTRY AT QEDESH.

the opposite bank, and had to be held head downwards to get rid of the water he had swallowed. Mutallu threw in his reserve chariots, but they only shared the fate which had overtaken the main body. Why he did not make use

of the solid mass of 8,000 spearmen who stood inactive on the eastern bank of the river all the afternoon, and watched the overthrow of their friends, we can only conjecture. It looks as though the Hittite tactics were as deficient as the Egyptian strategy had been. Mutallu had lost such an opportunity as is rarely offered to a commander; and the fortune of the day now turned steadily against him. Following up his success, Ramses and his household troops held the enemy in check by six successive charges, until towards the close of the day the laggard division of Ptah came up, and the Hittites were driven off the field and into Qedesh. One of the accounts of the battle describes how the infantry marched in at evening, and marvelled at the proofs of their king's prowess. 'They were marching one after another to the camp at eventide; they found all the tribes through whom I pierced strewn in carnage, whelmed amid their blood, with all brave fighters of Kheta-land, with children and brothers of their Chief. Morning lighted the field of Qedesh; no space was found to tread on for their multitude.' * The penitent soldiers loudly praised the valour of Ramses; but he coldly reminded them that they had left him to fight alone, and reserved his praises for Menna, his charioteer, who, though sorely terrified, had stood bravely by his master, and for the two good horses, 'Victory in Thebes' and 'Mut is satisfied,' which had drawn his chariot through the long day's strife. He gave orders that the horses should always be fed in his own presence when he was in his palace.

The same account states that Ramses renewed the battle on the following day, and forced the Hittite king to crave terms of peace. 'King Ramses prevailed over them, he slew them, they escaped not, they were overthrown under his steeds, they were strewn huddled in their gore. Then

* 'Records of the Past,' ii. 68.

the vile Kheta prince sent to do homage to the great name of King Ramses. "Thou art Ra-Harmachis, thou art Set, mighty of strength, son of Nut, Bar himself; thy terror is over Kheta-land brought low: thou hast broken the back of the Kheta for ever and ever."' This sounds very like a gentle smoothing over of the truth, calculated to soothe the vanity of the Pharaoh. It is not in the least likely that either the Egyptian or the Hittite army was in a condition for further combat. Both had lost heavily, the Egyptians probably quite as heavily as their enemies; and the two divisions of Amen and Ra, which had been so roughly handled, can scarcely fail to have been somewhat demoralized by their surprise and rout. Altogether we may conclude that the net result of the battle was that either side stood pretty much where it was, in spite of all the slaughter; and if the Hittite king was glad to offer terms of peace in order to get rid of an adversary so formidable as Ramses, even when out-generalled, had shown himself to be, Ramses would not be any less glad to assent to terms which would allow him honourably and safely to withdraw his sorely battered army. Had the second day's fighting ended, as he claimed, in a complete victory, Qedesh would scarcely have been left unattacked; but there is not the slightest indication that he made any attempt upon the town. There is no word of either presents or tribute from the Hittites, and Ramses returned to Egypt empty-handed.

Thus the great campaign on which such high hopes had been set had resulted in nothing—had, indeed, narrowly missed concluding with a serious disaster; and the prestige of the Egyptian arms must have suffered severely from the fact that the utmost they had been able to do was to fight a hardly drawn battle, and that they were forced to return to Egypt leaving Qedesh unharmed. The results of this loss of prestige were manifest before long. The king

himself, however, having by some luck and sheer hard hitting extricated himself from the danger in which his own wretched generalship had involved him, was disposed to make the most of the success which had attended his own individual efforts. He caused the scenes of the battle to be engraven on the walls of temple after temple throughout the land—the camp to the north-west of Qedesh, the beating of the spies, the breaking in of the camp enclosure, his own headlong charges upon the Hittites, and the flight of the latter through the Orontes to their supports on the other side. The fugitives are seen swimming across the river, or stretching out their hands to catch the outstretched hands of their companions. The King of Aleppo is being held head downwards by his rescuers, with the legend, 'The wretched chief of Aleppo turned upside down by his soldiers, after His Majesty had hurled him into the water' (Plate XIX.). The central incident of the battle, the isolation of the king, was made the subject of a heroic poem which attained great popularity, and is known as the poem of Pentaur, from the name of the scribe who copied it on the papyrus from which it became known to modern scholars. The poem describes the march of Ramses on Qedesh, the gathering of the Hittite host, and the rout of the division of Ra. This is but the prelude to the recital of the valour of Ramses.

'When His Majesty turned to look behind him,
He found around him 2,500 chariots in his outward way. . .
But there was never a chief with me,
There was never a charioteer,
There was never an officer of the troops,
Never a horseman.'

In his extremity Ramses invokes the help of Amen:

'What is in thy heart, my father Amen?
Does a father ignore the face of a son?
I have made petitions, and hast thou forgotten me?

He calls to mind all his gifts to the god of Thebes, pictures his desperate situation, and declares that his trust is only in God :

'I find that Amen is worth more than millions of troops,
More than hundreds of thousands of chariots. . . .
My cry rang unto Hermonthis,—
Amen came because I cried to him,
He gave me his hand, and I rejoiced.'

The god encourages the heart of the king, who charges upon his enemies, and performs prodigies of valour :

'Never found even one among them his hand to fight,
Their hearts rotted in their bodies for fear,
Their arms were all powerless,
They were unable to shoot an arrow.
Never found they their hearts to carry their lances ;
I caused them to plunge them in the water,
Even as plunge the crocodiles.'

Then follows a dramatic picture of the cowardly inactivity of the Hittite chief, forcibly contrasted with the daring of Ramses :

'Behold the vile chief, the smitten one, of the Kheta,
Stood among his troops and his chariots,
Gazing on the fight of His Majesty
For that His Majesty was alone by himself,
There being never a soldier with him, never a chariot.
He was standing and turning about for fear of His Majesty.'

As Menna, the king's charioteer, realizes the loneliness of the struggle in which his master is engaged, he begins to lose heart.

'When Menna my charioteer beheld that . . .
He became weak, his heart failed,
A very great terror went through his limbs ;
Behold he said to His Majesty—
"My good lord ! my brave prince !
Oh, mighty strength of Egypt in the day of battle !
We are standing alone in the midst of the enemy,

Behold they abandon us; the soldiers and the chariots,
Make a stand to save the breath of our lips.
Oh, save us! Ramses, loved of Amen, my good lord."
Then said His Majesty to his charioteer:
"Steady! steady thy heart, my charioteer!
I am going in among them like the striking of a hawk,
I shall slay in smiting, and throw in the dust.
What is in thy heart about these Asiatics?
By Amen! they are extremely vile in ignoring God,
Who never shall shine his face on millions of them." *

The poem is not without conspicuous merits. Its scenes are graphically portrayed, and the speeches put in the mouths of Amen, Ramses, and Menna, though perhaps somewhat lengthy for such an urgent occasion, are vigorously expressed. But one cannot help feeling that the unknown author has gilded the situation a little, and has written rather what he knew would be pleasing to his royal master than what he knew to be the truth.

In spite of what court poets might write, in spite even of the natural pride which he must have felt in the recollection of his own valour, Ramses cannot but have realized that his campaign had been a complete failure. The Syrians, at all events, realized this, for the records of the wars of his succeeding years show that practically the whole of Northern Palestine revolted, and that the flame of insurrection spread south even as far as Askalon, on the Philistine plain, which town Ramses was obliged to take by assault, as is shown on a relief at Karnak. It is not certain in what year this siege took place; but in his eighth year the king was in Galilee, where he had to reconquer the whole country, town by town—a proof of how much his prestige had suffered by his failure to capture Qedesh, and by his retreat without exacting tribute from the Hittites. Thus, after years of hard fighting, Ramses had only succeeded in winning back

* Petrie, iii. 55-61.

what his father before him had already held, and was not one step advanced towards the conquest of the Hittites.

There exist other claims of conquest, and particularly

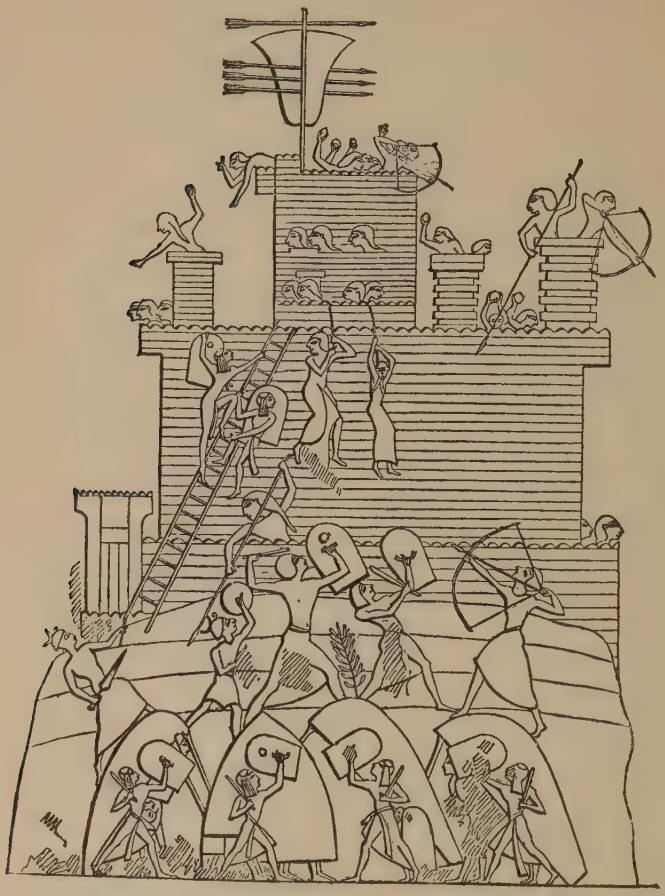


FIG. 30.—CAPTURE OF DAPUR IN GALILEE.

one undated inscription at the Ramesseum, which would lead us to suppose that he at length succeeded in carrying the war into the heart of the Hittite territory. The

Ramesseum inscription describes some fighting which took place before Tunip, and in which the king apparently repeated the mistake of the Battle of Qedesh, and got separated in some way from the main body of his army; but the inscription is much mutilated in addition to being dateless, and affords no very secure ground for the belief that he must have driven the Hittites out of Qedesh and all the country south of Tunip. If his conquests had been so far-reaching, the treaty of peace with the Hittites would probably have been conceived in very different terms. On the whole, therefore, the long wars of Ramses produced no permanent impression upon the Hittite power, merely maintaining the previously existing situation; but, on the other hand, they apparently convinced the Hittites that it was hopeless to dream of pushing further south in the face of Egyptian opposition. Further, there would seem to have been internal dissensions and civil strife within the northern nation itself. Mutallu, Ramses' old adversary, came to his end in some violent fashion, possibly at the hand or by the instigation of his brother Kheta-sar; and the latter prince, on succeeding to the throne, resolved to put an end to the fruitless strife between the two great powers.

Accordingly, on November 28 in the twenty-first year of Ramses, when the king was holding a great religious feast in his new Delta capital, the city of Pa-Ramessu-mery-Amen, a couple of envoys arrived from the Hittite court, bearing the final copy of a treaty whose terms had been agreed upon between the two monarchs. The treaty was engraved upon a silver tablet, and opened thus: 'The ordinance made by the great chief of the Kheta, Kheta-sar* the mighty; the son of Marsar,* the great chief of the Kheta, the mighty; the son of the son of Saplulu,* the great chief of the Kheta, the mighty; on a declaration tablet of silver, to User-Maat-Ra, the great prince of Egypt, the mighty;

* *See note on p. 234.*

the son of Men-maat-ra, the great prince of Egypt, the mighty; the son of the son of Men-peh-ra, the great prince of Egypt, the mighty. The good ordinances of peace and brotherhood, giving peace eternally, even from the beginning to the end eternally, even the agreement of the great prince of Egypt with the great chief of the Kheta; may God grant that there never shall come enmity between them, according to the ordinances.'* Then follows a general agreement of brotherhood between the two kings, their children, and their lands, with stipulations that neither prince shall invade the territory of the other; and the two previous treaties are confirmed. Further, a defensive alliance is agreed upon, each prince being liable to assist the other in time of war, either personally or by sending a contingent of troops; while in case of frontier troubles both kings are to act together. A special condition states that subjects deserting from one kingdom to the other are not to be received, but are to be handed over to their native State. The treaty is ratified by an appeal to all the great gods of Khetaland and of Egypt; and 'the thousand gods of the Kheta,' with 'the thousand gods of Egypt,' are called upon to curse the person who shall break the treaty, and to bless him who shall keep it. A codicil refers to the extradition of fugitives from either land, and provides that those who are thus extradited shall not be punished. 'Any of the people who are taken and sent back to Ramses, let it not be that his criminal action is raised against him, in giving to destruction his house, his wives or his children; or in slaying him; or removing his eyes, or his ears, or his mouth, or his feet; and he shall not have any criminal action raised against him.' The treaty closes with a detailed description of the great seals of the two branches of the Kheta nation which are affixed to it.

* Petrie, iii. 646-8

Of this remarkable treaty, whose terms make it difficult for us to realize the fact that it dates from 1300 B.C., and is absolutely the first international agreement whose details have come down to us, it must be noticed that the contracting parties are on terms of personal equality. There is not the slightest indication of any vassalship on the part of the Hittite prince; on the contrary, the obligations are perfectly reciprocal. The two nations had learned to respect one another, and wisely determined to waste no more of their strength in useless war. Obviously, also, the agreement put a stop to all further ambitions of Ramses in the way of northern conquest. The boundary between the two kingdoms is nowhere defined in the treaty; but we may conclude that it remained pretty much where the previous strife had left it, Ramses holding Syria probably as far as the southern slope of the Lebanon, while north of that lay the Hittite sphere of influence. Ramses, of course, claimed the peace as a great triumph for himself, and henceforward names himself 'the conqueror of the Hittites'; but the terms of the agreement show how little reality there was in the claim.

Once made, the treaty was loyally kept; and thirteen years later, in the thirty-fourth year of Ramses' reign, the alliance between the two powers was cemented by the marriage of a Hittite princess to the Egyptian king. Ramses has left an account of this important event, in which the god Ptah is made to describe how the land of Kheta was made subject to the palace of Ramses, so that the inhabitants thereof bring offerings, and the possessions of their chiefs belong to the King of Egypt, and that at their head is the eldest daughter of the prince of Kheta, 'to satisfy the heart of the Lord of the Two Lands.' On the arrival of the Hittite king, who may have been either Kheta-sar or his successor, and who was accompanied, not

only by his daughter, but by the King of Qedi and a numerous escort of soldiers, the commander of the frontier post hesitated to admit so large a party, and wrote for instructions to the king. 'Here is the prince of the Kheta, who brings his eldest daughter with a number of presents of every kind: and now this princess and the chief of the country of the Kheta, after having crossed many mountains, and undertaken a difficult journey from distant parts, have arrived at the frontiers of His Majesty. May we be instructed how we ought to act with regard to them?' Ramses, having consulted his god Sutekh, gave glad instructions for their admission, and received them with high honours. The princess was married to the Egyptian king, who was now between fifty and sixty years of age, and was given the title 'Maat-neferu-Ra' ('Beholding the Beauties of the Sun,' or, briefly, 'Dawn'). The Egyptians beheld with wonder the troops of the Hittite escort mingling with the soldiers of Egypt, against whom they had fought so stubbornly, 'the men of Egypt having but one heart with the chiefs of the Kheta, a thing which had not happened since the days of Ra.'

The romance, such as it was, of this wedding was later utilized by the priests of the Moon-god Khonsu as the basis of a legend in honour of their god, in which they described how the princess Bent-reshet of Bekhten, the sister of Maat-neferu-Ra, became ill, and how her father sent for a physician to the land of Egypt. Ramses sent a physician named Tahuti-em-heb, who found that the princess was possessed of a devil over whom he had no power. He advised that the god Khonsu should be sent for to heal the lady, and at the request of Ramses, Khonsu consented to go, and drove out the evil spirit. The prince of Bekhten was so delighted with the healing work of Khonsu that he wished to retain the god, and actually kept him for three years and five months; but at the end

of that time he was instructed in a vision that Khonsu wished to return to his native land, and sent him back with many gifts.

The treaty with the Hittites finally put a stop to the warlike ambitions of Ramses, and for the rest of his long reign of over sixty-six years we hear of no further military enterprise on his part. But his later years were fully occupied with the erection of monuments to his own glory. He was pre-eminently the builder-king of Egypt, and though his mad vanity led him to usurp many buildings in which he had no share other than that of placing his name upon them, his own genuine works are scattered over the whole land from the Delta to the far south. A great part of his activity was in the Delta, where, indeed, he fixed his court during the latter part of his reign, recognizing the need of being nearer to the centre of his Empire than was possible so long as the seat of government remained at Thebes. In the eastern Delta he built the city of Pa-Ramessu-mery-Amen, where the court was when the Hittite treaty was ratified. Tanis, famous from Hyksos times, now grew into one of the most important cities of the land. In front of its great temple Ramses erected a colossal statue of himself, of which only the fragments survive. It stood over 90 feet in height, weighed 900 tons, and was the largest, though probably not the heaviest, statue ever erected by the Egyptians.

Thebes was not neglected. The Great Hall at Karnak was completed, Luqsor was enlarged by the addition of another court and pylon, while the best work of the reign was expended on the Ramesseum, the king's own funerary temple. In front of it he erected another colossal granite seated statue of himself, which, though only 57 feet in height, as against the 90 feet of the monster at Tanis, is computed to have weighed 1,000 tons. Its huge fragments still strew the ground in front of the

ruins of the Ramesseum (Plate XX.). The obelisks which were set up in celebration of the royal jubilees are more numerous in this reign than in any other, not only because of the unusual length of the reign, but because vanity prompted Ramses to celebrate jubilees more frequently than his predecessors. The most familiar of these giant monoliths, the twin of the one which still stands before the pylon of Luqsor, now adorns the Place de la Concorde at Paris. At Abydos Ramses carried on extensive works in addition to the temple of Sety; but the poor execution of his reliefs contrasts most forcibly with the delicate work of the earlier sovereign (Plate XXXII., 1). Perhaps the most remarkable relic of his activity, and in many respects the most wonderful of Egyptian temples, is the rock-shrine at Abu Simbel in Nubia. This extraordinary sanctuary is hollowed out of a great conical promontory of rock which projects into the Nile. Its façade is about 100 feet wide and 90 feet in height; on either side of its doorway sit two colossal figures of Ramses, each about 65 feet high, while the front is crowned by a cornice of twenty-one dog-headed apes. The chambers within penetrate into the solid rock to a depth of 185 feet, and the walls are decorated with representations of the wars and conquests of the king. 'No visitor to the temple of Abu Simbel,' says Breasted, 'will ever forget the solemn grandeur of this lonely sanctuary looking out upon the river from the sombre cliffs.'

In spite of the vigour of the earlier years of his reign and the ceaseless activity of his building operations, it is easy to trace the marks of decay and degeneracy in the latter days of Ramses. Indeed, the king lived too long for his own reputation and for the welfare of his kingdom. He seems to have devoted himself to a life of voluptuous enjoyment; and, great as were the resources of his kingdom, his profuseness and ostentation must have taxed

1. RAMESSEUM, WITH FRAGMENTS OF COLOSSUS OF RAMSES II.
2. ROCK TEMPLE OF ABU SIMBEL.

them to the very utmost, so that his successor, Merenptah, had to bear the burden of a weakened people and an impoverished treasury. The king's harem was enormous. One record states the number of his sons at over a hundred; but there were at least seventy-nine sons and fifty-nine daughters—a fact which, as Petrie remarks, 'suggests that his concubines were probably as readily accumulated as those of an Arabian Khalifa.' Of his numerous wives, his sister Nefertari appears to have been the favourite—at least, in the earlier years of his reign. Her figure appears on a number of his colossal statues (Plate XXVI.), and she is prominent in the smaller rock-temple at Abu Simbel. Another sister and wife, Ast-nefert, was the mother of his two most important sons, Khaemuas and Merenptah. His eldest daughter, Banutanta, or Bint-Anath, was probably also married to her father, as were at least two other daughters. Of his sons, the fourth, Khaemuas, seems to have been the favourite. He was made High-Priest of Ptah, at Memphis, and had the conduct of the great festivals of his father's reign; but in the fifty-fifth year he died, and his place as heir was filled by Merenptah. Khaemuas left behind him a great reputation for learning. Round his name there grew up traditions of his skill in all manner of magic arts, and the 'wizard prince' is the hero of the famous romance of Setna, in which he is depicted as having stolen from the mummy of a wizard the magic books of Thoth, and having in consequence become the victim of a voluptuous and murderous species of female ghoul. As the long reign dragged on, Khaemuas was followed to the grave by other members of the royal family, until Merenptah, the thirteenth son, was heir-apparent. The consequences of a long period of luxurious and slothful rule began to show themselves in the state of the nation, and her enemies began to press hard upon the frontiers, and even to establish themselves upon the sacred

soil of Egypt. But the warlike days of Ramses were long since done. He could no longer display the vigour which had baffled the cunning plans of the Hittite king; and he delighted himself in idly recalling the exploits of his hot youth, when what was needed was not recollection, but prompt action.

Finally, after a reign of sixty-six years, he passed away in extreme old age. His mummy was found, along with that of his father Sety, at Deir-el-Bahri, and the face 'still bears strongly the stamp of the haughty self-satisfaction and pride of the monarch.' In truth, he had but little real cause for satisfaction. The vanity which led him to inscribe his name and the story of his deeds on almost every building in the land imposed for long upon other nations and ages the idea that he was the greatest of all kings; and to this day the name which he bore suggests to most minds the typical Pharaoh. But his was a fatal reign for the country which he ruled so long. The headlong and rash valour of his early morning added nothing to the real greatness of Egypt; the luxury and senile vanity of his long evening impoverished and weakened her. His father had handed down to him a land rapidly recovering from the disasters which had diminished her power and lowered her prestige among the nations. He left to his successor an Egypt which was far advanced in an incurable decay, and at whose gates the enemy was already thundering.

*Note to p.* 213.—It is conjectured by some authorities that the old Hittite king Mursil was actually in command of the army raised by the confederacy (*vide* H. R. Hall, 'History of the Near East,' pp. 360, 361).

*Note to p.* 227.—The Egyptian versions of the Hittite names Khattusil, Mursil, and Shubbiluliuma.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE DEFENDERS OF THE EMPIRE—MERENPTAH AND RAMSES III

THE kingdom to which Merenptah (1234-1214 B.C.) succeeded on the death of his father, Ramses II., was in a condition which called for the utmost vigour and care on the part of the new ruler. The warlike glory, such as it was, of the earlier days of the old king's reign, had been fruitless of any real accession of strength to the nation; the abundant display of material splendour scarcely masked the very real decline in national prestige; the vast building operations of Ramses must have constituted a very heavy burden on the resources of the land; and altogether the reign, like that of Louis XIV., had been grandiose rather than great. Of its sixty-six years, about fifty had been spent in peace; and during this long period of inaction the military organization of the Empire probably declined considerably in efficiency. Indeed, the evidence indicates that, in spite of the vainglorious records of Ramses, the Egyptians found it a heavy task to maintain their borders, and, in particular, were being heavily pressed upon from the west by the restless tribes of North Africa. Merenptah's heritage was, therefore, a somewhat troubled one, and the outlook was threatening. As already mentioned, the new king was the thirteenth son of Ramses, and only became heir-apparent on the death of Khaemuas, the wizard prince. At the time of his accession he must have been nearly sixty years of age; and thus the throne of Egypt was occupied by a comparatively old man at a time when her condition

seemed to require a young and vigorous ruler. The early years of his reign were peaceful. Intercourse with Syria was frequent; the treaty of peace with the Hittites was maintained, and Merenptah was politic enough to put the neutrality of that warlike people on the firmer basis of an interested friendship by sending supplies of corn during a famine in Syria—an act of helpfulness which may have stood him in good stead in the great crisis of his reign, when trouble on the eastern border might easily have proved fatal.

In his fifth year the storm-cloud which had long been gathering on his western frontier broke at last. Under the Libyan king, Mauroy, an alliance had been formed embracing the Libyans and several other tribes whose names are given as the Aqayuasha, Tursha, Luku, Shardena, and Shakalsha, and a large army had been gathered together for the invasion of Egypt. The object aimed at was not mere conquest and plunder, but a permanent occupation of the Delta, as is shown by the fact that the invaders brought their families with them. No such danger had threatened Egypt since the Hyksos invasion. Merenptah gathered a strong force to meet the Libyan army, and prepared a second line of defence, in case his troops should be defeated in the field, by re-fortifying Heliopolis and Memphis. Before the actual shock of war took place, he was visited in a dream by the god Ptah, who gave him a sword, and encouraged him to hope for victory in the approaching battle.

The Egyptian troops got into touch with the invaders at Pa-ari-sheps (possibly Prosopis) on the first day of the month Epiphi (April 25). The actual battle was delayed for two days, as the whole Libyan army had not yet come up, and the Egyptian leaders, with a confidence justified by the event, preferred apparently to wait until all their foes were assembled, and to strike a single crushing blow. By

April 27 Mauroy had brought up the last of his straggling contingents, and the battle began. The Egyptian tactics were those which have generally been adopted by civilized races in dealing with a less civilized enemy. The heavy-armed infantry and the chariots were held back, while for six hours the Libyan army was subjected to a hail of arrows from the Egyptian bowmen. When the invaders, who seem to have had no archers with whom they could reply, as no bows are mentioned among the spoils, had been sufficiently disorganized, the infantry was sent in to complete their discomfiture with the sword, and finally the chariots were loosed in pursuit of the broken enemy. The slaughter was heavy. The lists at Karnak give a total of between 8,000 and 9,000 slain, to which the Libyan contingent contributed over 6,000; while more than 9,000 captives were taken, together with a great booty. The number of swords taken from the captives was 9,111, while upwards of 120,000 weapons of all sorts were picked up on the battle-field. Such figures make it evident that the allied force was a very large one, and that the Battle of Pa-ari-sheps should rank as one of the greatest triumphs ever achieved by the Egyptian arms. The Libyan camp was plundered, and then the skin tents and equipment of the invaders were set fire to, and the sacred soil of Egypt purged from the last relics of the presumptuous foe who had desecrated it.

On seeing that the battle was hopelessly lost, Mauroy fled, tearing off the plumes which were the insignia of his rank; and, under covert of the darkness, he succeeded in eluding the pursuit of the victors. Merenptah's Song of Triumph graphically describes the miserable condition to which the would-be conqueror of Egypt was reduced:

> 'The wretched conquered prince of Libya fled,
> Under the protection of the night,
> Alone, without the plume on his head.

His feet failed.
His women were taken away before his face.
* * * * *
He had no water-skin for his sustenance,
His brothers plotted his murder,
His officers fought with one another. . . .
Arriving in his own country, he lamented;
Everyone in his country was ashamed to receive him.
Punished prince, evil fate, "feather"!
Called him all the inhabitants of his city.'

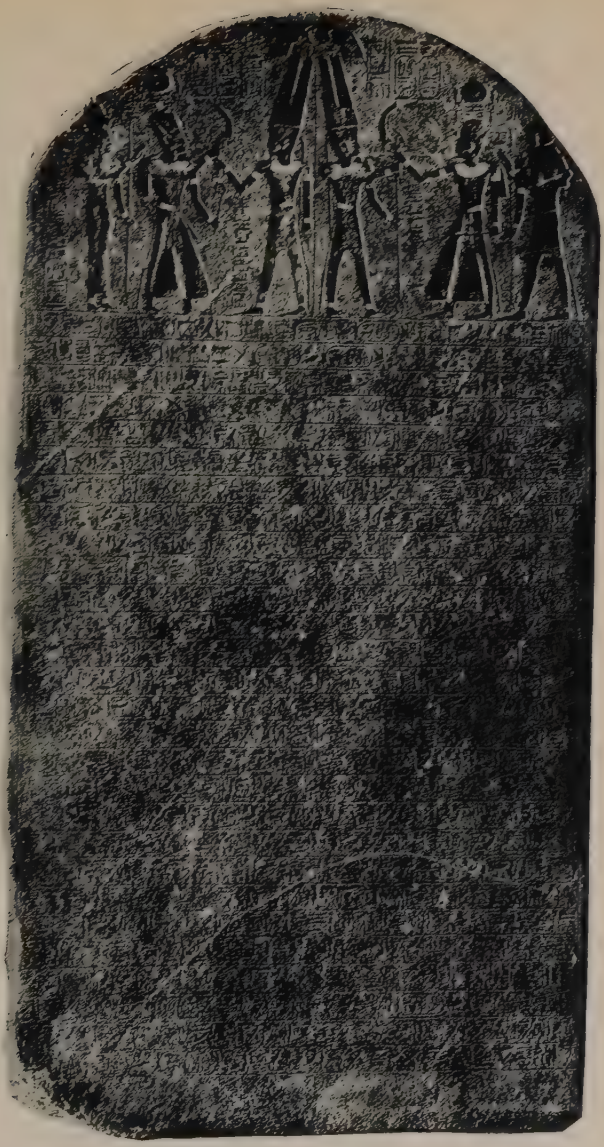
As the danger of the land had been urgent, so its relief was great. In the Song of Triumph quoted above, of which the full copy was found by Petrie in Merenptah's funerary temple, inscribed on the back of a re-worked stele of Amenhotep III. (Plate XXI.), vivid expression is given to the joyful feelings of the long-harried fellahin.

'One is talking:
"Come far out upon the roads."
There is no fear in the heart of men,
The castles are abandoned. . . .
The battlements lie calm in the sun
Until their guards awake. . . .
One goes with singing,
There is no more the lament of sighing man,
The villages are settled anew,
He who has tilled his crop will eat it.'*

The latter part of the Triumph Song as given on the Merenptah stele contains the only mention of Israel hitherto found on an Egyptian monument. The reference is as follows:

'Seized is the Kanaan with every evil,
Led away is Askalon,
Taken is Gezer,
Yenoam is brought to nought,
The people of Israel is laid waste—their crops are not.
Khor [Palestine] has become as a widow for Egypt.'

* Spiegelberg in Petrie's 'Six Temples at Thebes,' pp. 26-28.



TRIUMPH STELE OF MERENPTAH.

It thus appears that there was a people of Israel already living in Palestine at the time of Merenptah's reign, and that they suffered, along with other tribes of Syria, from an Egyptian raid, whether earlier in the reign than the Libyan war, as Breasted supposes, or subsequent to it, as the position of the reference might suggest. On any view of the date of the Exodus this reference is puzzling. Perhaps the least unlikely explanation is that of Petrie, who suggests that when the migration into Egypt occurred in the time of Joseph, some of Jacob's stock may not have left Palestine, or may have returned as soon as the famine was over, and that it may be the descendants of these to whom the inscription refers.

The overthrow of the Libyan invaders is the one important event of Merenptah's reign of which we have any record. Indeed, the monuments of the reign are somewhat scanty, and are mostly of comparatively poor execution. Perhaps Merenptah felt the need of economy after the immense and wasteful architectural splendours of his father's day; at all events, even in his own funerary temple he preferred to make use of second-hand material, and chose a site close to the magnificent temple of Amenhotep III., in order, apparently, to find a convenient quarry in the work of his great predecessor. The Libyan Triumph Song, as already mentioned, is cut on the back of a fine black granite stele of Amenhotep, while much of the splendid work of the earlier temple was smashed up in the most ruthless manner to provide suitable stones for the walls of that of Merenptah. In many other places, work attributed to Merenptah is merely a usurpation of the work of earlier kings, the bad example set by Ramses II. being diligently followed by his son, whose cartouche is coarsely superposed upon the fine work of a more artistic period.

Merenptah's tomb in the Valley of the Kings contains

an empty sarcophagus—a fact accounted for by careless readers of the Hebrew Scriptures as being quite natural, seeing that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was drowned in the Red Sea. The Exodus narrative, of course, makes no such statement, and, in fact, the king's mummy was found a few years ago in the tomb of Amenhotep II. It had been placed in the coffin of Set-nekht, but was identified by means of a scribe's inscription on the bandages. On July 8, 1907, the mummy was unwrapped by Professor Elliot Smith in the presence of Professor Maspero and others. The dead king had been plundered by tomb-robbers, but the mummy was in good condition. The face was of the characteristic family type already seen in Sety and Ramses II.— high-bred and aristocratic in its lines, with pronouncedly aquiline nose and strong jaw. Merenptah left, so far as the records go, only two children—a daughter named Arit-nefert, and a son, Sety-Merenptah, who succeeded him, and is known as Sety II.

His reign has none of the factitious glory with which that of his father has been invested. Probably all that the king could do was to give his land a brief breathing-space in which to recover from the results of the luxury and extravagance of Ramses II. At the least, however, the great deliverance from the Libyans appears to have been an event as much more important than the much-belauded Syrian campaigns of Ramses as the Battle of Pa-ari-sheps was more decisive than that of Qedesh, over which such a to-do was made. In the Libyan War, Egypt was fighting for her very existence. Had the fortune of the battle gone against her, the whole current of her history might have been changed; and an impartial judgment will probably attribute no little credit for the deliverance to the stout old Pharaoh who, with the burden of more than three-score years upon his shoulders, rolled back the tide of semi-barbarian invasion from his frontiers.

It has been very generally supposed that the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt took place in this reign. This view is not altogether free from difficulties. One of these, the mention of Israelites on the Triumph Stele at Thebes, has been already adverted to. Another is presented by the report of a frontier official, dated in the eighth year of Merenptah, in which he records the bringing in of a tribe of Semites to the lakes of Pithom, in the land of Succoth, to feed themselves and their herds. If the Exodus took place, as is generally believed, in the latter part of the reign of Merenptah, it seems somewhat strange that, only a few years before that event, Egyptian officials should be found quietly adding to the Semitic population of the frontier districts. Some authorities therefore incline to the view that the Exodus must have taken place earlier, probably towards the close of the Eighteenth Dynasty; and it has been suggested that the Khabiri, whose work in overrunning the Egyptian fiefs in Southern Syria we have noticed during the reign of Akhenaten, may have been the advancing tribes of Israel. But this view also presents its own difficulties, which will be perfectly obvious to those who have read the story of the Nineteenth Dynasty campaigns in Syria, and which are even graver than those which beset the received hypothesis. On the whole, the balance of probability seems to incline towards the more familiar date; but it must be remembered that the evidence is very slender, and the materials for arriving at anything approaching to certainty are not known to exist.*

The death of Merenptah was followed by a period of great confusion and misery. Several obscure descendants of the great line of the Nineteenth Dynasty held themselves to have claims upon the throne, and their struggles lasted for a number of years. Even the order of the succession is doubtful, as is also the relationship of the parties concerned; but the reconstruction given by

* See the discussion of the Exodus problem in Chapter XVIII.

Maspero* and Petrie is here followed, with the proviso that it differs considerably from that of some other authorities. Perhaps the mere order of these ephemeral reigns, during which Egypt drifted further and further into disorganization and decay, is not of much importance.

Merenptah, then, was succeeded by his son Sety-Merenptah, or Sety II. Of his reign, which did not last for much more than four years, there is practically nothing to record. The only fact of interest known with regard to him is that the Orbiney Papyrus of the British Museum, containing the famous 'Tale of the Two Brothers,' belonged to him when he was crown prince, and that we thus owe to his literary taste one of the most interesting of Egyptian folk-tales, which bears a curious resemblance to the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Sety II. appears to have associated his daughter Tausert with himself upon the throne; but on his death she was thrust aside by her brother Amenmeses, who usurped the crown. His reign, however, was brief, for in about a year one of the high officials of State, the great Chancellor Bay, brought about a revolution, and Siptah, another brother of the same family, was set up in his stead. Siptah consolidated his power by marrying his sister, the displaced heiress Tausert, and the two reigned as joint sovereigns for five or six years. The Chancellor Bay seems to have been the power behind the throne during all this reign, for he claims that he was 'the great keeper of the seal of the whole land to its limits, establishing the king upon his paternal throne.' Probably a good deal of the royal authority rested in the hands of this king-maker, who had the presumption to place his own name on the foundation-deposits of Siptah's funerary temple side by side with the king's cartouche, and who was the only official who ever had the honour of burial in the Valley of the Kings.

It may be imagined that during these brief and feeble

* Maspero finally favoured the order Amenmeses, Siptah, Sety II.

reigns the condition of the kingdom can scarcely have been a happy one; and when Siptah and Tausert passed away, or were driven from the throne, there ensued a period of absolute anarchy, in which the only authority was that of a Syrian named Arisu, who ruled, or rather misruled, the country simply as a robber chief. A vivid picture of the state of affairs is left us by the Great Harris Papyrus, a document written in the reign of Ramses IV., in which Ramses III. is presented as describing the condition of the country before his father Set-nekht came to the throne. 'The land of Egypt had fallen into confusion, everyone was doing what he wished, they had no superior for many years. . . . The land of Egypt was in chiefships and in princedoms; each killed the other among great and small. . . . In years of scarcity, Arisu, a Syrian, was to them as chieftain. He made the whole land tributary to himself alone. He joined his companions with him, and seized their property. And they treated the gods in the same manner as they treated the people; offerings were not presented in the shrines of the temples.'*

Out of all this confusion there arose a scion of the old stock of Sety and Ramses, who in a brief reign of not more than one year succeeded in working the temporary regeneration of society, and in laying the foundations of a more stable rule. 'When the gods turned again to peace,' says the Harris Papyrus, 'they established their son, come forth from their flesh, as prince of the whole land on their great throne . . . son of the sun, Set-nekht. . . . He set in order the whole land which was rebellious; he cut off the abominable who were in Egypt; he purified the great throne of Egypt; he established the temples with the offerings for serving the nine gods according to their statutes.' Making due allowance for the exaggera-

* Petrie, iii. 134, 135; 'Records of the Past,' viii. 46.

tion of filial pride, this record of Set-nekht's short reign shows him to have been a strong and energetic ruler. He associated with himself his son, Ramses III., and shortly thereafter the regenerator died, and with the new reign the Twentieth Dynasty begins.

Ramses III. (1202-1170 B.C.) was, indeed, the last great Pharaoh of the ancient Egyptian stock; and though he fell on a time when Egypt, far from being any longer a conquering power, now needed all her strength to guard her own frontiers against invasion, he holds an honourable place in the line of soldier-kings for the vigour and tenacity with which he maintained the credit of Egyptian soldiership against the hordes of semi-barbarous tribes which dashed in wave after wave upon the defences of his land both from west and east.

During the time of confusion which followed the reign of Merenptah, the Libyans and their allies had been quietly taking advantage of Egypt's weakness to accomplish by more or less peaceful penetration what they had failed to do by force of arms. 'The Lebu and the Mashauash were seated in Egypt; they took the cities on the western side from Memphis as far as Karbana, reaching the great river on its entire side. . . . For many years they were in Egypt.' In other words, they had occupied the whole western side of the Delta from Cairo to Alexandria. For some time after his accession Ramses did not venture to disturb them. He was occupied with the completion of Set-nekht's reforms, and particularly was endeavouring to reorganize the army in view of the struggle which manifestly lay ahead. The backbone of the regular force of the land now consisted of the Sherden mercenaries, familiar to us from the time of Ramses II., but now apparently employed in much greater numbers. With them was associated a Libyan tribe called the Qehaq, and in addition the army was strengthened by a large native element. It is signifi-

cant, however, that the mercenaries are mentioned first, as though they formed the more important part of the force.

By the fifth year of the reign the situation in the Delta had grown so serious as to call for immediate action. The confederate Libyans and Mashauash had resolved on a larger plan of conquest—'to attack Egypt, and to carry fire before them from one end of it to the other.' Their plan, as before, was one not only of conquest, but of occupation, as is shown by the multitude of women and children which accompanied them. But their attempt was made too late. Egypt had now to a great extent recovered from

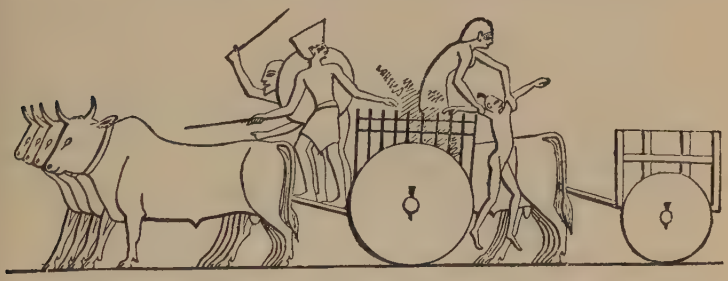


Fig. 31.—Ox-Carts of the Northern Invaders.

the feebleness induced by the period of anarchy, and the newly organized army of Ramses proved adequate to the call made upon it. The king met the invaders in the Delta, near a town subsequently named 'Ramses III. is the Chastiser of the Libyans,' and gained a complete victory over them. More than 12,000 of their warriors fell in the battle, and, according to the Harris Papyrus, tens of thousands of women and children and hundreds of thousands of cattle were captured. The male captives were branded, and distributed as slaves among the galleys of the fleet, while the cattle were handed over to the service of the temple of Amen.

This great victory purchased a respite for Egypt; and

during the time of peace the king prosecuted actively the building of the great temple at Medinet Habu, which he had already begun in the first year of his reign, and whose reliefs and inscriptions form practically an illustrated history of the chief events of the time. The respite, however, was brief, and in the eighth year another wave of invasion broke upon the borders of the Empire.

This time the attack came from the side of Syria. A great league of the restless tribes of the northern Mediter-

FIG. 32.—EGYPTIAN WAR-GALLEY.

ranean—Pulosathu or Philistines, probably from Crete; Daanau or Argives; Zakkaru, probably another Cretan race; and 'Uashashau of the Sea'—had established itself in Northern Syria, and was now slowly moving southwards. The peoples who formed the ancient Hittite confederacy, unable to resist their advance, were absorbed into the alliance, and the Hittite power, once so formidable, was completely and finally broken. The northerners journeyed by land with their families in two-wheeled ox-carts of the rudest description (Fig. 31), while at sea a numerous and well-appointed fleet kept pace with the land advance.

They established a camp and place of arms in the land of Amor; but their halt there was not of long duration, and the frontiers of what remained of the Egyptian Empire were speedily threatened. Ramses prepared to meet the new danger with the same energy which he had displayed against the Libyan league. He strengthened the defences of the frontier, collected the fleet in the ports of the Nile mouths, and marched out with a numerous army, the fleet keeping pace with the land force, just as the Philistine and Argive armada was doing on its part. 'The mouths of the river seemed to be a mighty rampart of galleys, barques, and vessels of all kinds, equipped from the bow to the stern with valiant armed men. The infantry, the flower of Egypt, were as lions roaring on the mountains; the charioteers, selected from among the most rapid warriors, had for their captains only officers confident in themselves; the horses quivered in all their limbs, and were burning to trample the nations underfoot.'*

Somewhere in Palestine, and probably not very far from the sea, Ramses and his host encountered the land forces of the allied advance. There are no detailed descriptions of the combat; but it resulted in the signal overthrow of the northern league, and the reliefs at Medinet Habu show the mercenaries of the Egyptian army plundering the ox-carts of the defeated enemy. Rapidly pursuing the fleeing foes, Ramses drove them back upon the seashore, reaching it himself in time to support his fleet, which had brought the advancing northern armada to action. The islanders, who apparently relied upon fighting their ships at close quarters, were disconcerted by the deadly fire of the Egyptian archers with whom Ramses had equipped his galleys. Their oarsmen were shot down, and their whole fleet was thrown into confusion before they could come near enough to force a hand-to-hand conflict; and

* Maspero, 'Struggle of the Nations,' p. 468.

the Egyptian fleet then closing with them secured a complete victory. Some of the enemy's galleys were capsized, others were boarded and carried by the Egyptian marines. 'They were dragged, overturned, and laid low upon the beach; slain and made heaps from stern to bow of their galleys, while all their things were cast upon the waters, for a remembrance of Egypt.' The list of captured towns which Ramses gives upon the walls of his temple would seem to indicate that he pushed his advantage and marched far north. Carchemish, Tunip, Aleppo, and other towns are mentioned which recall the palmy days of conquest under Tahutmes III.; but it is probable that these lists are mere copies of earlier ones, and certainly Ramses never seriously attempted to hold the northern portions of the former Egyptian Empire.

His double victory needs no factitious splendour. He had delivered his country from one of the greatest dangers which ever threatened it; and if his valour added nothing to Egyptian territory, it had been, in all probability, the salvation of the land. The record of his triumph on the walls of Medinet Habu is interesting as giving the first picture extant of a naval battle. Ramses is shown with his troops upon the shore, aiding by archery fire the efforts of the Egyptian fleet, which advances, pouring in a hail of arrows upon the unfortunate squadrons of the islanders. The latter are already in confusion; one of their galleys has capsized, and others are being cleared by the assault of the Egyptian marines. The picture suffers somewhat from attempting too much. It is confused and over-detailed; but it deserves attention, and is full of information as to the equipment and armament of the war-vessels of this early period (Plate XXII.).

Ramses was not yet destined to have rest. Three years later, in his eleventh year, the Mashauash forced the Libyans into another joint invasion of the Delta. Under

NAVAL BATTLE OF RAMSES III., MEDINET HABU.

the leadership of the chief Masha-shal, son of Kapur, they advanced into the western provinces in considerable force, but were promptly met by Ramses and his now war-hardened army. 'The soul of the enemy said for the second time that they would pass their lives on the frontiers of Egypt, and that they would till the valleys and plains thereof as their own possessions. But death came upon them in Egypt, and on their own feet they entered into the furnace which burneth up filth, and into the fire of the bravery of the king.' The battle resulted in another decisive success for the Egyptian arms. Masha-shal was slain, and Kapur was taken prisoner. More than 2,000 of the invaders fell, and a similar number, one-fourth of whom consisted of women and girls, was made captive. This second blow seemingly broke the spirit of the Libyans and their allies. 'The country of the Mashauash hath been smitten down at a blow, and their friends the Libyans have been slaughtered, and they shall never reap again.' As a matter of fact, this defeat, the third within little more than a generation, effectually destroyed the Libyan hopes of an occupation of the Delta. Henceforward we find them no longer appearing as invaders in force, but gradually drifting in as subjects of Egypt, while their warriors take service in increasing numbers in the Egyptian ranks, until, finally, their position becomes so strong that the Libyan soldier of fortune, Sheshenq, succeeds in establishing himself upon the throne of Egypt, and the Twenty-second Dynasty is a Libyan one.

With his last victory over the western tribes the great wars of Ramses III. came to a close, though there is a record of an expedition into Palestine which seems to have been distinct from the campaign of the eighth year. For the rest of his reign the king settled down to the peaceful development of his kingdom. One of the features

of the reign was the extension of commercial enterprise. A great expedition was made to Punt. 'I built large vessels and transports, all equipped with numerous workmen and many servants. . . . Sailing away on the great sea of the waters of Kat, they set out for the land of Punt; no mischief happens to them arriving safe. Laden are the ships and transports with all the products of the Divine Land. . . . They depart, they arrive at the land of Koptos, they anchor in peace with the products they carried. Discharged on the landing on asses, on men, and loaded in boats on the river and canals of Koptos, they come.' The mention of the transhipment of cargo would seem to indicate that the canal by which Hatshepsut's ships reached the Red Sea had been choked and abandoned.

Another expedition was sent for copper to the land of Ataka, probably in the Sinai Peninsula, while the turquoise mines of Serabit-el-Khadem were reopened and profitably worked. 'I sent out messengers to the land of Ataka for the great mines of copper which are in that place. . . . Having found their mines, they were loaded with ore. . . . The cargo was piled up in the magazines in bricks of ore, as it were hundreds of thousands; they were of the colour of gold. I let the people see them like marvels. I sent officers and chiefs to the land of Mafkat of my mother Hathor, mistress of turquoise. . . . There were brought to me marvels of real turquoises in numerous bags carried before me, not to be seen again while there are kings.' In order to facilitate intercourse with Syria, a great well was dug in the desert, and strongly fortified. 'I made a very large well in the land of Aina. It is enclosed by a wall like a mountain of granite . . . its doorposts are made of cedar-wood, their locks of bronze with bolts.'

The land of Egypt itself was also developed in other respects. Ramses carried out a scheme of afforestation on a large scale; and under his strong hand there was a sense

of peace and security which had long been lacking in the country. 'I made to be planted the entire land with trees in leaf. I let the people sit in their shade. I made the woman of Egypt to go unveiled to the place she wished; no vile person molested her in the way. I made to repose in my time the infantry and cavalry, the Sherden

FIG. 33.—RAMSES III. IN HIS HAREM.

and the Qehaq in their towns, lying down the length of their backs. They were not on the look-out; there was no enemy from Kush or from Syria. Their bows and arms lay in their arsenals. They ate and drank in joy, their wives with them, and their children at their side. . . . I set right afresh the land that was going to waste. The land was well satisfied in my time. I did well to gods and

men also.' This is a picture of such prosperity as had been long unknown in Egypt.*

Unfortunately, the picture has its darker shades. The moral condition of the nation was not by any means so satisfactory as its material prosperity; and for this the king himself was not blameless. His life seems to have been characterized by considerable licence. The sculptures on his pavilion at Medinet Habu, which represent him trifling in his harem with his concubines, indicate a laxness which is corroborated by the satires upon him in contemporary papyri; and it is evident from other documents of the time that the example thus set in high places was only too faithfully imitated through all ranks of society.

But even this decay of morality was not the most ominous feature of the reign. It is apparent that the whole social and economic balance of the land was being overset by the extraordinary development of priestly influence, and especially by the phenomenal growth of the power of the priesthood of Amen. For this state of affairs Ramses was not altogether to blame. The reformations of Akhenaten had only resulted in an accession of power and reputation to the priests who had waged a victorious war against the throne. The period of strife at the close of the Nineteenth Dynasty had resulted in a further weakening of the royal position; and Set-nekht had probably gained the throne only by conciliating the priesthood which the usurper Arisu had offended. Ramses, therefore, had inherited a situation in which the priestly element was really the strongest and most permanent force in the kingdom; and even had he wished to resist its claims, the issue of a struggle between the crown and the priesthood might well have been problematical. Far

* For the whole account of the doings of Ramses III., see translation of the Great Harris Papyrus, in 'Records of the Past,' viii. 5-52.

from wishing to curtail the priestly influence, however, Ramses did his very best to augment it.

The Great Harris Papyrus, the largest of ancient Egyptian documents, a huge roll upwards of 130 feet long, contains an account of his gifts to the temples of the gods, or rather, perhaps, of his confirmation to them, with additions of his own, of the revenues which they already enjoyed from the gifts of former kings. An analysis of this remarkable document reveals a most amazing state of affairs Thus, to take only a few items, the temples held as part of their endowments 169 towns in Egypt and Syria, 113,433 slaves, 493,386 head of cattle, and 1,071,780 *aruræ* of land, or more than one-seventh of the whole country. They had a fleet of eighty-eight barques and galleys, while it took fifty-three workshops and shipyards to work up the raw material which poured into their store-houses. In addition to all this, there were the annual duties imposed upon the people for the upkeep of the temples, among which we meet with such items as 460,700 sacks of corn and 326,995 geese, while the annual grants from the royal treasury were on a vast scale. Some idea of the enormous wealth of the religious orders may be gathered from the fact that their income in respect of such items as corn, bread, wine, and incense came to 5,740,352 sacks of corn, 6,744,428 loaves of bread, 256,400 jars of wine, 466,303 jugs of beer, and over 2,000,000 jars of incense, honey, and oil. Evidently 'it snowed in their house of meat and drink.' And all this property, both inherited and annual, was exempt from taxation! It is manifest at a glance that the religious orders of Egypt had become a serious menace to the economic stability of the land, and that the nation was being bled white for the aggrandizement of a body already too powerful and capable of becoming a distinct danger to the State.

The evil was augmented by the unequal distribution of

these vast resources. The share of Amen was out of all proportion to those of the other gods. Though the god of Thebes was but a parvenu, so to speak, in the Egyptian Pantheon, he had far outstripped the ancient gods in influence and in the richness of his endowments. He held at least five times as much property as Ra of Heliopolis, and ten times as much as Ptah of Memphis. Thus, out of the 113,433 temple serfs, 86,486 belonged to him; out of 493,386 cattle, he owned 421,362; out of 1,071,780 *aruræ* of land, his share was 898,168. In this way not only was an abnormally privileged class being created at the expense of the whole nation, but, with an almost incredible folly, one small section of this class was being exalted to a power out of all proportion to that of any other section of society in the State. Instead of balancing the various priestly orders against one another, and so preventing any from growing to abnormal power, the Egyptian sovereigns were industriously building up in the hands of the priesthood of Amen a power which was already a formidable rival to that of the throne, and which before long proved itself to be the preponderating force in the State.

In startling contrast to this picture of the gorging of a rapacious and insatiable priesthood is that presented by the record of the workmen in the necropolis of Thebes during the twenty-ninth year of Ramses. Month after month these unfortunate men are denied the few sacks of corn necessary for their sustenance, and are forced to go on strike and send deputations to the officials piteously imploring that their allowance might be forthcoming. 'We have been driven here by hunger and thirst; we have no clothes, we have no oil, we have no food. Write to our Lord the Pharaoh on the subject, and write to the governor who is over us, that they may give us something for our sustenance.' The picture of these poor creatures

HUNTING SCENES OF RAMSES III., MEDINET HABU.

starving for want of fifty sacks of grain, while the granaries and cellars of Amen were bursting with plenty, is a sufficiently caustic commentary on the apparent prosperity of the country.

The chief public work of the reign was the great building at Medinet Habu. Here, close to the small temple of Tahutmes III., the king erected the last of that splendid series of mortuary temples built by the great monarchs of the Empire. Its reliefs and inscriptions are of considerable historical importance, though the story of the king's exploits is too often almost smothered in conventional verbiage, and the lists of captured towns can scarcely be regarded as always truthful. In its architecture the temple gives evidence of the decline of taste which had set in. However imposing the mass of the building may be, its lines are clumsy and heavy, and its colonnades are squat and lacking in grace. Some of the reliefs, however, are not deficient in spirit, and even in execution are both vigorous and graceful. That of the naval battle, already alluded to, has more value as an historical document than as a work of art; but that of Ramses hunting the wild bull (Plate XXIII.) shows considerable merit both in design and execution, and that of the lion-hunt, though scarcely so fine, is also praiseworthy. The unique feature of Medinet Habu was the pavilion which stood in front of its true pylon. This was copied from a Syrian *migdol*, or watch-tower, and is probably a reminiscence of the campaign against the Philistines and their allies. This pavilion contains those scenes of Ramses in his harem which have been already mentioned (Fig. 33).

At Karnak a small temple was built at right angles to the axis of the great temple of Amen. What must have been in some respects the most remarkable structure of the reign has, unfortunately, been allowed to perish almost totally in modern times through careless excava-

tion and lack of supervision. This was the royal palace at Tell-el-Yehudiyeh, built of limestone, granite, and alabaster. Its distinction was that, instead of being adorned with the usual mural paintings or incised sculptures, its decoration consisted of plaques of enamelled terra-cotta set in cement. The little which remains of the work shows that the building must have been one of the finest examples of a rare branch of Egyptian art; but its fate has been a melancholy one. 'For ten years it was a quarry of alabaster, and a mine of beautifully coloured inlaid tiles and decorations. Some pieces with figures of captives, and thousands of rosettes for inlaying, are all that remain' of this beautiful structure.

The last days of the reign of Ramses were darkened by one of those palace conspiracies so frequent in the annals of Eastern monarchies. One of the ladies of the harem, called Tiy, had a son, Pentuere, whose claims to the throne she desired to establish in preference to those of the heir-apparent. She therefore conspired with another of the royal concubines, and succeeded in gaining over to her side a number of the palace officials, chief among them the highest official of the harem, 'the great man of the house, Pai-baka-kamen.' His function in the plot was to keep up communication between the secluded inmates of the seraglio and their fellow-conspirators in the outer world; and through him were passed out such messages as were needed. 'Excite the people, goad on the enemies to begin hostilities against their lord.' The art of magic was called in to help the progress of the plot, and 'the royal superintendent of the cows,' Pen-huy-ban, managed to secure from Ramses' own library a book of magic, according to the directions in which he made the wax figures, familiar to professors of the black art in all ages, the mutilation and ill-treatment of which were supposed to cause illness in the person against whom the plot was

directed. The conspiracy, however, rested also upon more material powers. The sister of the commander of the bowmen in Ethiopia was in the harem, and succeeded in gaining over her brother to the plot; and apparently the first move was to be made by the Ethiopian troops.

In some unknown manner the plot came to light before it was fully matured, and the king appointed a royal commission to try those who were implicated. His instructions to this commission show that he was unwilling to be personally concerned in an investigation which involved many who were closely connected with himself. 'What the people have spoken, I do not know. Hasten to investigate it. You will go and question them, and those who must die, you will cause to die by their own hand, without my knowing anything of it. You will also cause the punishment awarded to the others to be carried out without my knowing anything of it.' The officials charged with the investigation divided themselves into two tribunals, one to try the harem officials, the other to deal with the more highly placed criminals. The sentences passed on the latter were exclusively death sentences. That on the individual who had been the centre of the whole conspiracy runs as follows: 'Pentuere, who formerly bore another name. He was brought before the court, because he had joined with his mother Tiy, when she conspired with the women of the harem, and because he acted with hostility against his lord. He was brought before the vassals that they might question him. They found him guilty; they dismissed him to his house; he took his own life' (or, 'he died of himself').* The mummy of an unknown person whom Maspero believes to have been this guilty prince was found with the royal mummies at Deir-el-Bahri. It bears marks of a death characterized by great agony, and Maspero suggests that Pentuere may

* Erman, 'Life in Ancient Egypt,' p. 144.

have been mummified while yet alive. Others, however, consider that the state of the mummy points rather to the action of an irritant poison.

The progress of the trial was interrupted by an incident which shows very forcibly how unreliable were some of the elements with which the king had to deal, and how little dependence could be placed on even his most trusted servants. Three of the very judges who formed the royal commission were suddenly arrested and put on trial. It appeared that some of the women of the harem, together with Pai-es, one of the chief culprits, had formed an intimacy with them, and had visited them in their houses, where, with the most astounding slackness, the judges had 'made a beer-house'—that is, had held a revel—with the people whom they were supposed to be trying. One of the judges was acquitted, but as for the other two, 'their guilt seized upon them,' and 'their punishment was fulfilled by the cutting off of their noses and ears.' One of the guilty judges, unable to bear his disgrace, subsequently committed suicide.

The whole affair, discreditable in the last degree alike to the state of morality and to the administration of justice in the land, must have been a severe shock to the king, who was now growing old. He did not survive to see the end of the trial which he had ordered, but passed away shortly after the celebration of his jubilee, having reigned for a little over thirty years.

As a king he had fairly established a considerable claim on the gratitude of his people. The vigour with which he repelled the dangerous attacks which were made upon his land is worthy of all praise, while he seems to have exhibited considerable energy in developing the commercial resources of the nation. The great blot upon his rule is his pandering to the rapacity of the priesthood of Amen; but for that he is probably not altogether to blame. He

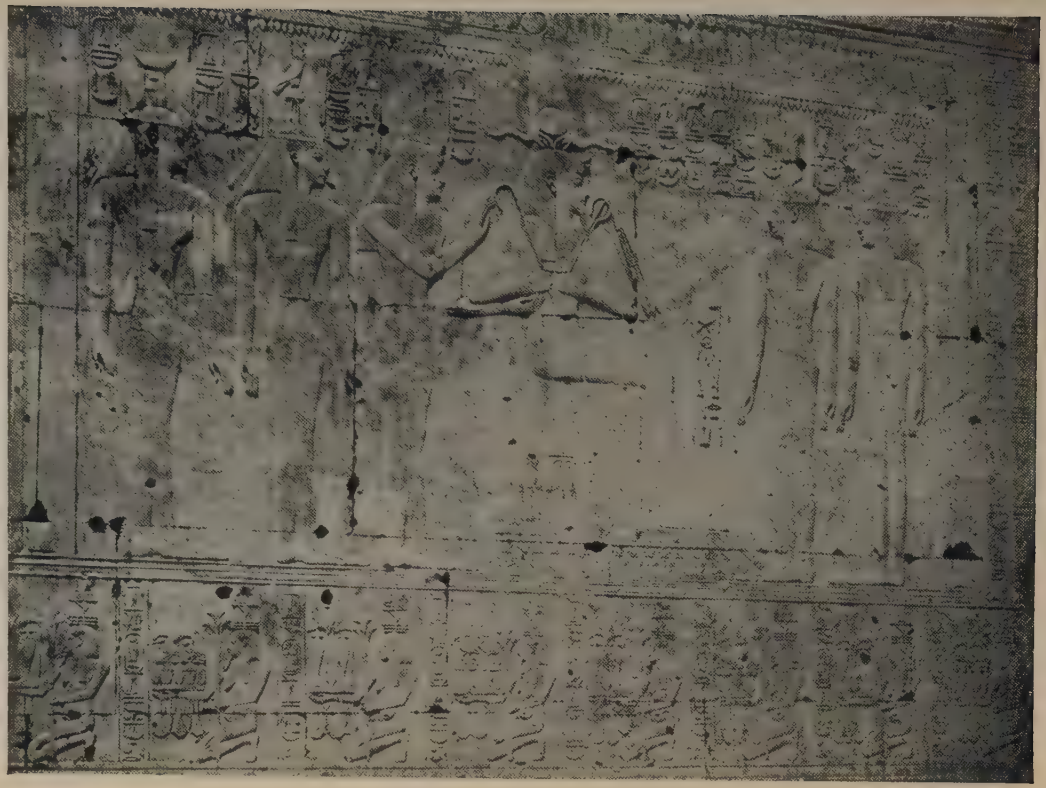
had inherited a situation in face of which even a stronger man might well have proved helpless. It was his great ambition to be a copy of his namesake, Ramses II., and this desire was shown in somewhat puerile fashion by his adoption of a cartouche which was a colourable imitation of that of his famous ancestor, and his copying of some of the great man's habits, such as that of being accompanied on his expeditions by a tame lion. Those who consider impartially the achievements of the two men will probably come to the conclusion that the third Ramses had no great reason to be envious of the second, and that his own deeds will fairly bear comparison with those of his more famous ancestor. If he did not succeed in replacing Egypt in the proud position which she held in the earlier days of the Empire, it was from no lack of energy on his part, but because the process of national decay had already advanced too far to be arrested.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SOCIETY, LITERATURE, AND ART UNDER THE EMPIRE

We have been dealing with the period during which Egypt attained and passed the climax of her power and splendour as a world-empire. It remains to consider briefly what is known of the social conditions, the literature, and the art of the nation during this, the most conspicuous period of its history. The materials are more ample than at any preceding time, and it is possible to gain a moderately accurate general idea of the conditions; though it must always be remembered that a general statement can be only approximately accurate for any particular section of the period. We are dealing with a range of something like 400 years; and, though changes were no doubt slower than in modern times, they were yet continuous and important, and it would be almost as ridiculous to suppose that the condition of an Egyptian under Tahutmes I. accurately represented that of his descendant under Ramses II. as it would be to imagine that the life of an Englishman under the Commonwealth was representative of life in England at the present time.

During the earlier part of the period, the Pharaoh was, perhaps more than ever, supreme. The old feudal aristocracy had passed away in the time of struggle which preceded the rise of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and there were no longer great local princes to be dealt with, each of whom, within his own domain, might consider himself a



RELIEF FROM TEMPLE OF SETY I.

not unworthy rival of the crown. The monarch stood out infinitely above the herd of officials who had taken the place of the feudal lords, and who were the creatures of the sovereign's will, made or unmade by a word; and the royal house gradually separated itself more and more from intimate association with any other family of the land. Marriages with subjects were discontinued or discouraged, and the marriage of brother and sister of the royal line became the accepted order. In case of there being no male issue by such a marriage, the son of one of the other ladies of the harem might succeed; but it was recognized that his title should be strengthened by marriage with a half-sister of the pure solar stock, who could confer a title more legitimate than his own. Later, as intercourse with Asia became more frequent, princesses of the royal Mesopotamian houses were sought as brides for the Egyptian monarchs; but, even so, a marriage with a Mitannian or a Hittite princess did not do away with the obligation of perpetuating the royal line through a princess of native Egyptian blood.

Life in the palace tended to grow always more and more luxurious as the warrior kings of the earlier years were succeeded by less energetic sovereigns. The increase of wealth had been accompanied by a total change of taste. The simple dress of ancient days had been superseded by elaborate customs and costly fabrics (Figs. 19 and 20), and the whole equipment of the houses of the upper classes showed a corresponding change in the standard of living. Morals had certainly not improved. The example of luxury and uxoriousness set by Amenhotep III. had been only too faithfully copied and improved upon by Ramses II., whose harem must have been enormous; and the tendency had degenerated into mere licence by the time of Ramses II.

Under the king, hosts of officials conducted the adminis-

tration of the country, and looked upon their positions as their patents of nobility. Nothing is more conspicuous during this period than the extraordinary preponderance of the official class; and the naïve lines in which the scribes of the time, creatures of red tape and reports, assert the superiority of their profession to all others are very enlightening as to the prevailing conditions, while the magnificent tombs which the chiefs of the bureaucracy were able to construct for themselves testify to their wealth and influence.

The two great privileged classes of the nation were the high officers of the regular army and the members of the priestly orders. The army was now, of course, a very different thing from what it had been in the days of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. For one thing, it had enormously risen in importance, as was natural in a State which was founded by the sword and developed by warfare. The army was now not a local, but a royal force, practically the sole armed force of the kingdom, and absolutely at the disposal of the reigning sovereign. The most numerous element in it may still have been—at least, at the beginning of the great wars—the native Egyptian, who served his time with the colours, and then returned to his usual occupation; but, as time went on, the importance of the native element steadily declined before the introduction of increasing numbers of mercenaries, largely Sherden and Qehaq, or Sardinians and Libyans. The officers of these mercenary troops, who were always on a war-footing, became a distinct and formidable caste in the nation, and we shall shortly see them able to place one of their own number on the throne of Egypt.

The regular forces of the crown were made up of three arms—the dreaded Egyptian archers, who formed an important part of the light-armed infantry; the heavy-armed infantry, who were mainly foreign mercenaries; and

the chariotry. This last arm, like our modern cavalry, appears to have been considered the aristocratic branch of the service. Even in the profession of arms, however, it was held that the true path to success lay through a good education, and the higher officers felt none of the contempt so often cherished by the soldier for the man of letters, but, on the contrary, inclined to disdain the rough

FIG. 34.—EGYPTIAN BOWMEN AND SPEARMEN.

detail of their own calling in comparison with that of the scribe.

We have, for example, a set of 'Instructions' written by Amenemapt, a high officer of the chariot force, who had also reached a good position in the diplomatic service, to his pupil Paibasa. One of these contains a warning against the 'unhappy position of officer of the chariot force.' This soldier-tutor pictures the joy of the young charioteer when first gazetted to his new rank.

'He receives beautiful horses,
And rejoices and exults,
And returns with them to his town.'

But the glamour of the new equipment speedily wears off, and the unfortunate young soldier finds his calling grow more and more irksome, until the climax of his misfortunes is reached when, on inspection-day, his kit is pronounced unsatisfactory, and

> 'He is bastinadoed on the ground,
> Bastinadoed with a hundred stripes.'

Paibasa is even more urgently warned by his experienced instructor against the position of an officer in one of the line regiments.

> 'What does it mean that thou sayest:
> "The officer has a better lot than the scribe?"
> Come, let me relate to thee of the fate of the officer, so full of trouble . . .
> . . . Let me relate to thee how he travels to Syria,
> How he marches in the upland country;
> His food and his water he has to carry on his arm,
> Laden like a donkey;
> This makes his neck stiff like that of a donkey,
> And the bones of his back break.
> He drinks dirty water. . . .
> If he arrives in face of the enemy,
> He is like a bird in a snare. . . .
> They have to bring him home on the donkey,
> Whilst his clothes are stolen, and his servants run away.
> Therefore, O, scribe,
> Reverse thine opinion about the happiness of the scribe and of the officer.'*

This depreciation of the military service comes, of course, from a period when the warlike glory of Egypt was somewhat on the wane, and no doubt in the great days of the conquest of Syria the service was held in much higher estimation; still, the passage has its own interest as showing the essentially unwarlike character of the Egyptian, even when fate had made him a soldier.

The other privileged class was the priesthood. The

* Erman, 'Life in Ancient Egypt,' p. 549.

whole trend of events during the period under review was towards their aggrandizement at the expense of the other classes of the community. In the earlier days of the Empire, when foreign conquest was resulting in a constant influx of wealth, the piety of the conquering monarchs established the precedent of vast gifts to the gods who had given victory to Egypt, and especially to Amen, the great god of Thebes; and the Egyptian priests, like their fellows in all ages, were careful to let slip no advantage which they had once gained. Thus, while the royal treasury, however constantly refilled, was constantly depleted by calls for public expenditure and by grants to meritorious servants, the wealth of the priesthood was left intact and continually growing; and when the lean years came, in which the tribute of Syria and Naharina no longer flowed into the royal coffers, the priesthood still maintained its claims for support from the reigning sovereign. We have already seen how the wealth and influence of the religious orders grew to an extent quite out of proportion with the resources of the nation, and became a serious burden on its well-being. Gradually the priesthood of Amen in particular came to form an *imperium in imperio*, with whose rights the king could not afford to meddle, even had he desired to do so, and whose favour he was obliged to conciliate by the bestowal of fresh privileges and benefactions, until the Twentieth Dynasty found the high-priest of Amen the equal of the Pharaoh, and, finally, his supplanter.

Of the toiling classes, who formed the great mass of the population, we hear comparatively little, and doubtless the glories of the Empire brought little improvement, if any, to their condition. Next to nothing is known of the condition of the middle classes and the upper artisan class; and, indeed, the existence of such people would scarcely be surmised were it not for the existence of many funeral steles on which no titles are attached to the names of the

dead. But we have seen how the lower-grade workmen of the Theban Necropolis with difficulty wrung the bare means of subsistence from the careless officials who had the oversight of their work, and we have no reason to believe that the hardness of their lot was exceptional As for the serfs who tilled the royal or priestly domains their lot must have been a sufficiently miserable one. The proportion of their crop which had to be paid to their superior was mercilessly demanded whether the harvest was good or bad. If they could not satisfy the demands of the overseers they had to pay with their persons, and were cruelly beaten with sticks. On the whole, the state of the social conditions during the period of Egypt's greatest splendour can scarcely be said to have been satisfactory. It presented in an extreme form all those contrasts of luxury and want, of great riches and dire poverty, with which we are familiar at the present day; while these contrasts were not alleviated by any hope that a man born to lower social rank might raise himself to a higher position. 'One fact is clear to our eyes,' says Erman: 'the bad administration . . . the extravagance of the upper classes, the extreme poverty of the lower—all this is of ancient date. . . . The stereotyped appeals, "We hunger, no provision is given to us," form a sad commentary to the vainglorious phraseology of the inscriptions which speak of the might and of the riches of the king.'*

In literature, the period, and particularly its latter part under the Nineteenth Dynasty, was rich, and a great proportion of the purely literary documents which survive belongs to this time. We have already seen specimens of what may be regarded as the highest flights of the literary genius of the Empire in the shape of the hymns to the Aten and to Tahutmes III., and in the heroic poem which

* 'Life in Ancient Egypt,' p. 129.

deals with the exploits of Ramses II. at the Battle of Qedesh. But the greatest wealth of the literary output lay in romantic tales. Of these, some were quasi-historical, like that romance of Tahuti and the capture of Joppa which has been already alluded to as being the prototype of the tale of Ali Baba. Others were more of the nature of pure romance. Of these, one of the most interesting is the Tale of the Doomed Prince. It relates how a king who had no son was at length gratified by the birth of an heir to the throne. When the Hathors, who hold in Egyptian narrative the place of the fairy godmothers of our own fairy-tales, came to pronounce upon his destiny, they prophesied that he was destined to die either by a crocodile, a snake, or a dog. To avert these fates, the young prince was kept carefully secluded; but, happening one day to see a man followed by a greyhound, he took a fancy to have a dog of his own, and the king gave him a boarhound puppy, which grew up along with him. When the prince reaches manhood, he desires to travel, and sets out incognito, accompanied by his faithful dog. After a time he comes to the land of Naharanna. The prince of the land has a favourite daughter whom he keeps in a tower 70 cubits high, and he has decreed that the man who can climb to his daughter's window shall marry her. The young prince accomplishes this feat, and though he represents himself as merely the son of an Egyptian officer, the princess falls so violently in love with him that her father is at last obliged to carry out his engagement and permit the marriage. The prince tells his wife of the triple fate which hangs over him, and she desires him to have his dog killed as a precaution, but he refuses. Unfortunately, the papyrus here becomes very imperfect, and we can only gather that, through the vigilance of his wife, the hero escapes the dooms of the serpent and the crocodile; but the obvious conclusion to which the story

is tending is that in some fashion he meets his death through his faithful dog.

Another romance is that Tale of the Two Brothers, Anpu and Bata, already mentioned as having been preserved on a papyrus which belonged to Sety II. when crown prince. In its earlier portion this story bears a very close resemblance to that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, or to any other of the similar stories which have been handed down in the literature of many nations. The latter part, however, breaks away into a recital of a maze of wonders which may have been full of mystical significance to the Egyptian reader, but are almost meaningless to us, and have no real connection, that we can trace, to the simple and vigorous narrative of the earlier portion.

One of the most curious literary remains of the period has, to our minds, neither interest nor merit as a piece of literature, but is full of information as to the taste of the class of scribes and their smug scorn of all other forms of life except their own. It consists of a letter from an unknown scribe to his friend Nechtsotep, who is a scribe of the War Department, and has to travel with the army and on errands connected with the service. The letter is an endless series of would-be-witty criticisms, first on the faults of Nechtsotep's literary style, as revealed in the letter which the author has received from him, and next on the wretched profession to which Nechtsotep has the misfortune to belong. The author pictures his friend making an imaginary journey through Syria, and fits him with numerous mock-heroic misadventures, each of which provides a fresh opportunity for banter. The style of the ridicule is somewhat elephantine; and the chief interest of the letter lies in its disclosure of the sublime self-conceit of the stay-at-home litterateur, and his absolute conviction of his own immeasurable superiority to any member of the

class of men who were doing the service which had made the name of Egypt great. In itself the book is merely wearisome, and nothing gives one a clearer idea of how impossible it is for our generation to appreciate the standpoint of intellect and taste belonging to these ancient days than to learn that in Egypt this monument of windy vanity and prolixity was held in great repute, and was used in the schools as a model of style.

The reputation of that didactic style of writing of which the Maxims of Ptah-hotep and Kagemni were earlier examples was sustained by such books as the Instructions of Ani to his son Khensuhotep. Ani conveys to his son the usual commonplaces about virtue and temperance, the duties of children towards their parents, and the respect due by inferiors to their superiors. Such flowers of wisdom as 'He who hates idleness will come without being called,' or, 'A good walker comes to his journey's end without needing to hasten,' are apt to pall at last; and one is refreshed to find that they did pall even in those far-off days. The young Khensuhotep at last turns in exasperation upon his platitudinous father, and remarks rudely, but not unnaturally, 'Do not everlastingly speak of thy merits; I have heard enough of thy deeds,' to which Ani meekly replies: 'This is the likeness of the man who knows the strength of his arm. The nursling who is in the arms of his mother cares only for being suckled; but no sooner has he found his mouth than he cries, "Give me bread."' It ought to be remembered to the credit of Ani, however, that he is one of the few Egyptian writers who seem to have had some idea of the spiritual nature of true religion.

To a somewhat higher level of the literary art belong such poems as the New Empire versions of the Song of the Harper. Their somewhat sombre moral is expressed in language which is not lacking in dignity, and may be

compared, not unworthily, with the bitter moralizings of the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem.

'Let there be music and singing before thee,
Cast behind thee all cares, and mind thee of joy,
Till there cometh that day when we journey to the land that loveth silence.
Celebrate a joyful day, O Neferhotep,
Thou wise man, with pure hands.
I have heard all that has happened to the ancestors:
Their walls fall down,
Their place is no more,
They are as though they had never existed. . . .
Mind thee of the day when thou, too, shalt start for the land
To which one goeth to return not thence.
Good for thee then will have been an honest life,
Therefore be just, and hate transgressions,
For he who loveth justice will be blessed.'*

But perhaps the most interesting of all the literary remains of the period are the love-songs which have been preserved to us in various papyri. In these nature triumphs even over the barriers of an outlandish speech and a mode of thought differing in many ways from our own. It is with difficulty that we can bring ourselves to tolerate what the ancient Egyptian considered fine writing; but the simple play of the emotions in some of these old songs has still power to charm. Tennyson had forerunners by the banks of the Nile who were not ignorant of the literary artifice which makes the flowers of the garden watch and wait for the coming of the loved one; and perhaps the following little passage may have seemed as charming to the Egyptian of the Empire as 'Come into the garden, Maud,' does to us.

'The little sycamore
Which she planted with her hand,
She begins to speak,
And her words are as drops of honey.

* Erman, p. 387, and 'Records of the Past,' vi. 130.

She is charming, her bower is green, . . .
She is laden with fruit
Redder than the ruby.
The colour of her leaves is as glass,
Her stem is as the colour of the opal, . . .
It is cool in her shadow. . . .
" Come spend this festival day,
And to-morrow, and the day after to-morrow,
Sitting in my shadow.
Thy companion sits at thy right hand. . . .
And thou dost follow what he says. . . .
I am of a silent nature,
And I do not tell what I see,
And I do not chatter." '*

Indeed, to the Egyptian the flower-garden with its pleasant shades was the natural setting for love-scenes; and the authors of the love-songs never seem weary of picturing the delight of walking among the flowers and trees in company with the beloved. Another couplet may be quoted from a poem, each of whose verses begins, in the original, with the name of a flower; the idea being that the maiden is weaving a wreath, and that each flower she adds to it reminds her anew of her lover

'Blush roses are in it, one blushes before thee.
I am thy first sister,
And thou art to me as the garden,
Which I have planted with flowers
And all sweet-smelling herbs.
I directed a canal into it,
That thou mightest dip thy hand in it
When the north wind blows cool.
The beautiful place where we take a walk,
When thine hand rests within mine,
With thoughtful mind and joyful heart,
Because we walk together.'†

In the earlier part of the period the art of the land had reached its full maturity. There is, no doubt, wanting in

* Erman, p. 194. † *Ibid.*, p. 389.

the painting and sculpture of the Empire something of that direct strength and simplicity which characterized the best work of the Old Kingdom; but there were still artists who could produce works of the very highest merit, alike in flat colour, in coloured relief, and in the round. The reliefs of Hatshepsut at Deir-el-Bahri (Plate VII.) belong to the very finest type of Egyptian work; while the hunting scenes, and the scenes of the numbering of the flocks from some of the Theban tombs of the period,

FIG. 35.—FOWLING AND FISHING WITH HARPOON.

are remarkably vigorous and interesting compositions (Figs. 35, 36, 37). In statuary, some of the figures of Tahutmes III. are worthy of remark (Plate IX.), while it is difficult to imagine any work which could better combine the dignity of royalty with the fidelity of a portrait than the colossal granite head of Amenhotep III. in the British Museum.

Later in the period we still meet with very beautiful and noble work. In some respects the reliefs of Sety I. at Abydos may challenge comparison with anything which Egyptian art has produced (Plate XXIV.). The workmanship is of extreme delicacy and fineness, while the figures have a certain slightly morbid grace which marks them

out from all other Egyptian work. At the same time, the art which they represent is that of a period which is too self-conscious and prone to over-refinement and over-elaboration; and in this respect it suffers by comparison with some of the straightforward and sound work of earlier times. Yet the Egyptian school has not many

FIG. 36.—FOWLING WITH THROW-STICK AND TRAINED CAT.

nobler examples of its skill than the reliefs of Hatshepsut's great temple and those of Sety at Abydos. Compared with these the relief work of Ramses II. and his successors is, in general, coarse and clumsy. When seen, as at Abydos, near the work of Sety, its defects are painfully evident (compare Plates XXIV. and XXXII., 1); and even the battle scenes of Sety are much superior to those of his more ambitious son. Yet it would be unjust to deny that even in the time of Ramses II. there was still a wonderful

amount of artistic skill, both in design and execution, at the disposal of the monarch. As examples of the power with which the artists of Ramses could handle portrait work on a colossal scale, the huge sitting statues of the Rock Temple at Abu Simbel may be instanced; while on a smaller, but still gigantic, scale some of the colossi at Luqsor are worthy of attention. If we wish to see how grace of design was still combined with technical skill in execution, we have only to turn to that masterpiece, the black granite statue of Ramses in the Turin Museum (Plate XXV.); while the granite bust of Ramses (young),* from Karnak (Plate XXVI., 1), and the figure of the king's wife Nefertari, from the base of one of the colossal statues at Luqsor (Plate XXVI., 2), are also works of very happy inspiration and fine craftsmanship.

The art of the Tell-el-Amarna school stands, of course, upon a plane of its own, and is rather a breach in the continuity of the artistic tradition of Egypt than a natural development of it. But the little that has survived from the work of Akhenaten's artists suffices to show that there were here the beginnings of a school which might have produced work remarkable, not only for the technical skill which belonged to all Egyptian art, but also for a truth and a living vigour more akin to the products of the Greek artistic faculty. The torso of Akhenaten's wife Nefertiti, and that of one of his daughters; the coloured relief of the heretic king and his wife, now in the Berlin Museum; some of the trial pieces of horse's heads, and other fragments rescued by Petrie from the ruins at Tell-el-Amarna, may be cited as examples of the best work of this school.

After the time of Ramses II. the decline is rapid. Merenptah's work is scanty, and, generally speaking, of poor execution. Under Ramses III. there is a great increase in the output; but it can scarcely be said that

* *See note on p. 278.*

Anderson, Photo.

BLACK GRANITE STATUE OF RAMSES II.

*In the Turin Museum.*

the quality of the work is commensurate with its quantity. The lines of the great temple at Medinet Habu are heavy and oppressive, and its reliefs are in general too complicated and too badly composed to be pleasing. Exception must, however, be made in favour of the scene already alluded to, in which Ramses hunts the wild bull—a design which occupies a place by itself in the work of this monarch.

FIG. 37.—WALL-PAINTING (THEBES).

One source of power the architects of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties understood and used, as it has seldom or never been understood and used in any other land—that of mere mass and size. The pillared hall of Sety at Karnak has great faults. As has been pointed out, the multitude of its columns is an evidence, not of strength, but of weakness, and is due to the architect having worked in a material too feeble for the proper execution of his great design. But, in spite of this defect, there is probably no more impressive structure in the world than this vast

hall, with its soaring central columns crowned by colossal architraves, and its labyrinth of lesser pillars in the side-aisles. Scarcely inferior is the unfinished nave of Amenhotep's temple at Luqsor, if, indeed, it be inferior at all in any respect except that of size; while the forecourt of the same temple, with its graceful bud columns, is one of the happiest inspirations of the Egyptian architect.

In the minor arts, or rather the artistic crafts, the period was marked by a considerable development. The great influx of foreign material, raw and manufactured, gave an impetus to the genius of the native Egyptian workman, and turned his mind to fresh models; so that, retaining all, or nearly all, his old technical skill, he developed in new directions. The whole of the Eastern world had at this time become commercially tributary to Egypt; and the growth of trade familiarized the craftsman of the Nile Valley with a greater variety of material, and with strange designs. Mesopotamia sent in wrought gold and enamels, rare woods for inlaying and other purposes, lapis lazuli and malachite. Crete, where the arts and crafts were now reaching a very high development, as evidenced by the remains at Knossos, sent beautiful vessels of gold and silver, inlaid with jewels, with lapis, and cornelian; Cyprus sent ivory, bronze, and copper. Not less important than the materials which were thus furnished in abundance were the models of different civilizations and tastes which opened up fresh avenues of thought to the native workmen. The activity of the various decorative crafts is very prominently shown in some of the tomb-pictures of the period, where the processes of carving and polishing stone, both for statues and vessels, of wood and leather working, of metal-workers, inlayers, and enamellers, are all depicted in great detail, and with wonderful fidelity and vivacity of representation (Figs. 38-40). As an instance of the manipulative skill of the time may be

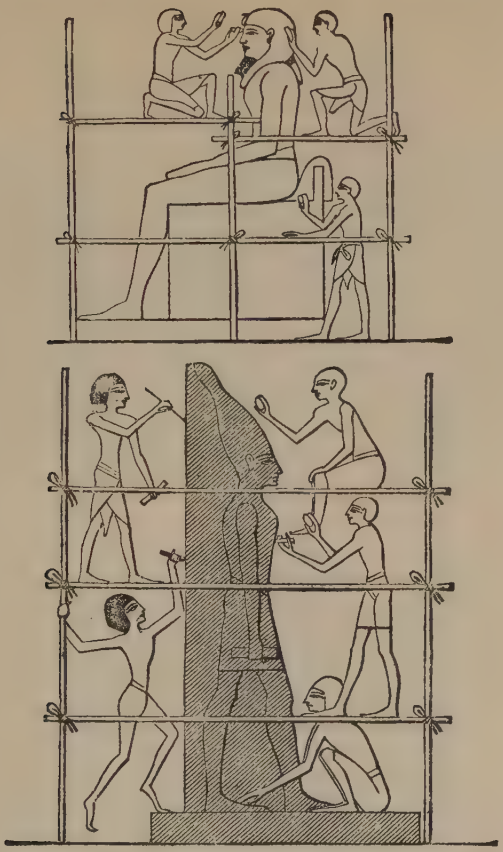


FIG. 38.—CARVING AND POLISHING COLOSSAL STATUES.

noticed the fact that a piece of woven tapestry from the tomb of Tahutmes IV. is said to be the finest specimen of such work known in the history of the art; while the triumphal chariot of the same king is decorated in low relief with battle scenes which are masterly alike in design and execution.

The material splendour of the period, however, cannot

mask the fact that the nation was rapidly decaying. The culminating-point, the meridian height of Egypt's power and greatness, was probably reached about the time of the reign of Amenhotep III., and rather earlier than later in

FIG. 39.—GOLDSMITHS AT WORK.

FIG. 40.—CARPENTERS MAKING MUMMY-CASES.

that reign; and whatever evidence of prosperity may be found in the subsequent reigns is but the evening glory of a sun that was sinking fast towards the Western horizon.

*Note to p.* 274.—Generally referred to as the moon-god Khonsu. Professor Petrie assures me that there is no question but that it is a portrait of the youthful Ramses II., wearing the attributes of Khonsu.

1. PORTRAIT BUST OF RAMSES II. (YOUNG).

2. QUEEN NEFERTARI, FROM COLOSSAL STATUE OF RAMSES II., LUQSOR.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE—PRIEST-KINGS AND SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

With the death of Ramses III. the glories of the Egyptian Empire came to a final close. Henceforward we have to trace the progress of a gradual decline in power and prestige on the part of the great kingdom of the Nile Valley. The decline is not absolutely unbroken. There are a few strenuous attempts at revival, as when Sheshenq, Taharqa, or the Saite kings endeavour to regain for Egypt something of the position which she once held. But these efforts, one and all, were doomed to failure, or at best to only a brief and partial success; and the star of Egypt steadily pales before the new constellations which were beginning to rise on the Eastern horizon. Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia all have their share in the downfall of the greatest and longest-lived monarchy of the ancient East; but the real root of the decline was in Egypt itself. It was internal decay and dissension which made the land unequal to the task of asserting itself against the new powers which successively held the East in thrall.

Ramses III. was succeeded by his son Ramses IV. (1171-1165 B.C.). The chief memorial of the reign of this weak successor of a great father is the Harris Papyrus, the significance of whose contents we have already noticed in connection with the preceding reign. This gigantic

significant evidence to the growth of priestly arrogance. The figure of the king who is making the gift is faced by that of the high-priest, no longer a mere pigmy compared with his royal master, as in all former scenes, but fully equal with him in stature (Plate XXVII., 1).

The high-priest thus claimed equality with the king; but actually he had far more than equality. He was king in fact, though not in name, and we find him taking upon himself the duties which had formerly devolved specially and solely upon the occupant of the throne. He magnificently restores that ancient portion of the Amen temple at Karnak which dated from the time of Usertsen I., builds himself a sumptuous palace, decorated with golden tablets, and erects a new treasury of stone to receive the revenues which now poured directly into the coffers of the god.

While the priests of Amen were thus aggrandizing themselves at the expense of the crown, the land was going steadily to ruin; disorganization and lawlessness were creeping in everywhere; and the extent of the prevailing corruption is forcibly marked in this same reign by the records of the trials of those robbers who were concerned in the spoliation of the royal tombs. For many centuries the great monarchs of Egypt had been laid to rest at Thebes, each with his magnificent regalia of gold and precious stones, and the lonely Valley of the Kings had been gradually becoming a vast treasure-house. As the power of the government to protect property steadily decayed, the royal tombs offered a prize too tempting to be neglected; and from the Abbott and Amherst Papyri we learn how, in this reign and the next, daring robbers violated first one and then another of the resting-places of the great dead of past ages. The story of how the tomb of Sebek-em-sauf and his wife Nubkhas was stripped of its treasures has been told in Chapter V.

1. RAMSES IX. AND THE HIGH-PRIEST.

2. TOMB OF RAMSES IX.

The thieves concerned were punished with the bastinado; but the punishment of one set of rascals did not deter others from engaging in the same nefarious trade. Later on we find that the tombs even of such recent sovereigns as Sety I. and Ramses II. had been violated by the sacrilegious spoilers; and the government was apparently quite unable to prevent these robberies. The records of the trials of the vandals concerned show pretty plainly that high officials were implicated in the matter, or at least connived at the spoliation; and within a short space of years practically every tomb in the royal necropolis had been violated. Of all the monarchs of the Empire, only two, Amenhotep II. and Tutankhamen, have been found actually lying in their own tombs; and even they had not altogether escaped the hand of the spoiler.

Such daring lawlessness as this was but the reflection of the general loosening of all the bonds of firm government. Finally, after Ramses XII., the last feeble representative of a once great stock, had been allowed to enjoy his shadowy dignity for twenty-seven years, a much longer period than was usual in his line, Her-hor, the high-priest of Amen, judged that the fruit which he and his father had so diligently cultivated was ripe for the gathering. The last Ramesside was thrust aside and got rid of in some obscure fashion; and Her-hor, who had been quietly gathering into his hands the reins of power, and who, in addition to his priestly office, was already commander-in-chief of the army, viceroy of Ethiopia, and overseer of the granaries, assumed the royal uræus and cartouche, and stepped into the vacant throne as the founder of a new dynasty. Thus miserably and impotently ended the great line which had begun two centuries and a quarter before with the first Ramses—the last royal line of Egypt which in anywise proved itself equal to the demands which were made upon it.

Her-hor (*circa* 1102-1086 B.C.), who had thus assumed the supremacy at Thebes, found himself unable to assert his dominion over the whole country. In his titulary he indeed calls himself 'Lord of the Two Lands,' as the great monarchs of the Empire had done; but this is as purely a fiction as the statement in which he speaks of the Syrians bowing down every day to his might. It is perfectly certain that he exercised no dominion whatever in Syria, where at this time the Philistines seem to have held the coast, while the Hebrews, under their Judges, and later under Saul and David, were steadily gaining control of the central part of Palestine; and at home Her-hor only held Thebes and the southern portion of the realm, while at Tanis another prince called Nesibanebdadu exercised sovereignty over the northern part. We have thus to deal, in the Twenty-first Dynasty, with two lines of kings—the priest-kings of Thebes and the secular rulers at Tanis.

Nesibanebdadu, the first of the Tanite line, was married to a princess, Thent-Amen, who appears to have been of the royal stock of the Twentieth Dynasty; and he thus had a title to the throne as valid as that of Her-hor. In fact, it would seem that the Tanite line claimed to be the genuine royal line of the land, and that Her-hor to some extent acknowledged this; for an inscription of Nesibanebdadu states that when the king was in his palace at Memphis the god Tahuti appeared to him, and informed him that the buildings of Tahutmes III. at Karnak were suffering from the effects of an inundation. Nesibanebdadu thereupon gave orders for a large body of men to proceed to the quarries at Gebelen, to extract stone, and to repair the damaged buildings. Thus, even in Her-hor's own city the Tanite prince asserts his right of interference, and it looks as though Her-hor's dominion were more or less of the nature of a theocracy,

which left the direction of material affairs to the northern ruler.

The same impression is conveyed by the celebrated papyrus which describes the travels and misfortunes of Wenamon—a document which is also interesting for the information which it yields as to the relations existing between Egypt and Syria in these degenerate days. Wenamon has been sent by Her-hor on a mission to Syria to secure cedar-wood from Lebanon for the sacred bark of Amen. On his way he presents his credentials to Nesibanebdadu and Thent-Amen, and is by them supplied with a ship and crew. Arriving at Dor, on the Syrian coast, the unfortunate envoy is robbed of the sums—£600 in gold, and £2,200 in silver, on Weigall's estimate—with which Her-hor had furnished him for the discharge of his commission. After trying in vain to get satisfaction from the prince of the city, Wenamon in some obscure fashion succeeds in seizing some silver, and proceeds on his way to Byblos. But there the envoy of the once omnipotent Egypt is treated with scarcely veiled contempt. Zakar-Baal, the prince of Byblos, refuses even to see him, and keeps him hanging about for five months; and it is only after one of the youths of the court has fallen into a prophetic frenzy and demanded that the Egyptian shall be honourably dealt with and dismissed that the prince grants an audience to Wenamon. The Egyptian envoy describes with considerable dash and vivacity the interview which succeeded. He found the prince of Byblos, he says, in an upper chamber of his castle by the sea, 'leaning his back against a window, while the waves of the great Syrian Sea were beating against the shore behind him.' After salutations have passed, Zakar-Baal demands Wenamon's business and a sight of his credentials, professing to disbelieve his statement that he was commissioned by Her-hor and Nesibanebdadu. Condescend-

ing, however, to business, the prince at last admits that his forefathers were in the habit of sending cedar-wood to Egypt; but, he says, they were paid for it, and, if he is paid, he will do as they did. Poor Wenamon, who has nothing to pay with, can only appeal to the dignity of the god for whom he is seeking the cedars. He tries to impress Zakar-Baal with the fact that Amen rules all lands, and to make him realize what a crime he has committed in allowing the envoy of so great a god to wait unsupplied; and promises, further, that the blessing of Amen will rest upon the prince if he grants the timber required. The picture of the two parties trying to bargain from absolutely opposite standpoints—Zakar-Baal holding out for hard cash, and Wenamon offering instead the priceless but somewhat intangible blessing of Amen—is distinctly amusing, as Zakar-Baal seems perfectly to have perceived.

Finally, a compromise is arrived at. Zakar-Baal agrees to send some timber to Egypt in advance as a pledge of good faith, while Wenamon sends his scribe along with the timber to obtain more money. On the return of the messenger with supplies, the prince grants Wenamon 300 men and 300 oxen to bring down the timber; and at last the envoy is ready to depart with his cargo. Zakar-Baal, who seems to have derived much pleasure from tormenting the poor man, comes down to bid him good-bye, and, as a parting kindness, tells him of the fate of some other Egyptian envoys who had been detained at Byblos for seventeen years, and had finally died there. With quite overpowering courtesy he offers to take Wenamon to see their graves; but the envoy tremulously declines the honour, and is about to depart, when eleven ships of Zakru pirates put into Byblos, and finding the Egyptian there, violently assert that he must not be allowed to depart, because he has wronged some of their kinsmen, no doubt

over the matter of the theft at Dor. Wenamon's courage fairly breaks down under this last stroke of fortune, and he sits down on the shore and weeps. To console him, Zakar-Baal sends him sheep, two jars of wine, and an Egyptian dancing-girl, Thent-nut; while he himself goes down to treat with the pirates, and characteristically informs them that, while he cannot imprison Wenamon, they are quite at liberty to follow and capture him on the high seas.

At last the sorely tried envoy gets to sea; but even then his troubles are not at an end. He is cast by a storm upon the coast of Cyprus, and the Cypriots promptly determine to kill him. Fortunately, the queen Hataba, in passing from one of her palaces to another, comes upon the scene, and Wenamon appeals to her through the medium of a Cypriot who could speak Egyptian. Hataba has compassion, and bids him be comforted, and rest himself; but the papyrus here breaks off, and the rest of Wenamon's Odyssey is lost.

Apart from the dash and vigour of the story, its chief interest lies in the disclosure which it makes of how completely Egyptian prestige has waned since the days even of Ramses III. A petty princelet like Zakar-Baal seems to have little or no respect for the power of either Her-hor or Nesibanebdadu; and Wenamon, instead of threatening reprisals for the indignities which are heaped upon him, can only appeal to the shadowy authority of Amen, and has only blessings to offer instead of hard cash in payment of the goods he needs.

Her-hor's son Piankh died before his father's reign came to a close, and the Theban line was carried on by his grandson Pinezem I. The contemporary sovereign of the Tanite line was Pasebkhanu I., whose only memorial of importance is the vast brick wall with which he surrounded the temple area at Tanis. The Theban prince finally

married Maat-ka-ra, the daughter of Pasebkhanu, thus uniting the interests of the rival houses. Of the succeeding princes of the two dynasties little is known of interest or importance. The rule, alike of the priest-kings at Thebes and the secular line at Tanis, is distinguished by nothing but helplessness and the hopeless decay into which the country was steadily sinking under its weak sovereigns.

We owe them, however, a debt of gratitude for the action with regard to the mummies of the ancient kings which was forced upon them by the insecurity and lawlessness of the times. During this miserable period the mummies of a number of the greatest monarchs of the Empire were examined, re-wrapped, and moved from one tomb to another in the vain hope of finding a place of security, till they were finally deposited in an old tomb near the temple of Deir-el-Bahri. There they remained, until, in 1872, the Arab tomb-robbers discovered their resting-place and resumed the process of spoliation—a process which led at last to the hiding-place being disclosed to the authorities, and the mummies of these ancient sovereigns being removed to the Cairo Museum. It was during this time of Egypt's weakness that the Israelites established themselves as masters of Central Palestine, and, under Saul and David, set up a kingdom, insignificant indeed, both in extent and duration, compared with other monarchies of the ancient East, but destined to have a greater influence than any of these upon the history of the world.

While the dominion of the priest-kings and the Tanites was thus dragging ingloriously towards a close, there had been rising in the northern part of the kingdom the family which was destined to revive, for a time at least, something of the glory of the Empire, and to bring in a period of firmer and more settled government. The line from which sprang Sheshenq I., the founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty, is that of a Libyan soldier of fortune,

Buyuaua, who lived in Herakleopolis early in the period of the Twenty-first Dynasty, and whose family steadily grew in power and importance, until about 950 B.C., when, on the death of the last Tanite Pharaoh, Pasebkhanu II., its then representative, Sheshenq, was able to seize the throne and the title of Pharaoh. Sheshenq I. set up his court at Bubastis, in the Delta, and legitimized his usurpation in the customary way by marrying the princess Ka-ra-maat, daughter of Pasebkhanu II., either to himself or to his son, afterwards Uasarkon I. He secured for his eldest son Auput, who predeceased him, the high-priesthood of Amen at Thebes, and was thus able to command practically the whole of the kingdom, though the sacred territory of Thebes maintained at least its fiscal independence.

The founder of the new dynasty showed himself possessed of more vigour than any Egyptian ruler had exhibited since the days of Ramses III.; and in particular, his relations with Palestine were such as to indicate that he cherished the ambition of reasserting Egyptian control in Syria. The princess of Egypt whom Solomon of Israel made his chief wife was perhaps a daughter of Sheshenq.* We may conclude that the Pharaoh held a kind of suzerainty over Israel at this time, an idea which is confirmed by the statement of 1 Kings ix. 16: 'Pharaoh, King of Egypt, had gone up and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.' His policy seems to have been directed, with some craft, towards the maintenance of his own influence in Palestine by the balancing of rival powers against one another; for we find that, when Solomon's exactions had aroused discontent in his kingdom, Jeroboam, who was recognized as the centre of the disaffection, fled to Egypt, and was received by Sheshenq, who thus plainly showed his purpose

* Or of his predecessor Hor-Pasebkhanu (Pasebkhanu II.).

of acting as arbiter of the destinies of the Israelite State.

The revolt of the northern tribes after the death of Solomon, and the subsequent strife between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, gave him his opportunity. The narratives in Kings and Chronicles record how he came up against Judah with a huge army, and after taking other cities, sat down before Jerusalem, and either captured and spoiled it, or was bought off by the surrender of much of the treasure which Solomon had accumulated in his capital. This account is confirmed by the relief which Sheshenq caused to be sculptured on the southern outside wall of the temple at Karnak. Here the colossal figure of Amen is represented leading up a train of figures representing the towns captured in the Syrian campaign, to the number of 156 (Plate XXVIII.). The towns named are distributed through both Judah and the northern kingdom; and it would appear either that Sheshenq's campaign was directed against both States, and not against Judah only, or else that he claimed as captured towns all of Jeroboam's cities which had acknowledged his suzerainty by paying tribute—an explanation which is not improbable. The 156 towns make a good show in the inscription, but the names really only bear witness to how far short the power of the Twenty-second Dynasty fell of that of the earlier conquering lines. Megiddo is the most northerly point mentioned, and most of the captured towns lie considerably further south. One interesting name in the list is that of a place called 'Field of Abram'—the earliest monumental occurrence of the name of the great founder of the Hebrew race.

Sheshenq added to the already vast temple at Karnak the largest of its courts—that known as the Court of the Bubastites, which stands in front of the pylon of Ramses I. and the pillared hall of Sety. It is on the southern wall

LIST OF CONQUESTS OF SHESHENQ.

of this court that the relief of the Palestine campaign is placed. The court, however, was never completed by the Bubastites, and it was left for Taharqa the Ethiopian to erect the colonnade of which one huge column still survives (Plate XXIX., 2), and for the Ptolemies to add the unfinished western pylon which now forms the first access to the great temple.

After a reign of over twenty years, Sheshenq was succeeded by his son Osorkon or Uasarkon I. (930-894 B.C.), of whose long reign of at least thirty-six years little of importance is known, save that the record of his gifts to the gods in the first three years of his reign, amounting in all to over 500,000 pounds Troy of gold and silver, shows that Egypt at this time must still have been wealthy and prosperous, however far it may have declined from the power of earlier days. This Uasarkon has been supposed to be that '*Z*erah the Ethiopian' who invaded Judah in the reign of Asa, and was completely defeated by that king. The identification has been questioned, but some authorities maintain that there are solid grounds for accepting it. The very considerable average length of the reigns of the various Takerats, Sheshenqs, and Uasarkons who compose the remainder of the Bubastite line would seem to point to the fact that the Twenty-second Dynasty had established a tolerably firm grasp upon the kingdom, though there are indications of family feuds and other troubles and disturbances. But the history of the land during the later years of the dynasty is almost an absolute blank. The great festival hall of Uasarkon II. at Bubastis affords evidence in its sculptures of the manner in which the important feast of the king's jubilee was then observed; and we find, with a sense of the poetic justice of events, that the granite colossus erected at Tanis by Ramses II., who destroyed and usurped the monuments of so many other kings, was

itself broken up by Sheshenq III., and used as part of the material for a pylon which he built.

It becomes evident, however, that the grip of the Bubastite line was gradually weakening as the dynasty drew towards its close, and that the local princes and mercenary captains of the Delta were asserting their independence. On the death of Sheshenq IV., the last king of the line, one of these chiefs, Pedubast, established the short-lived Twenty-third Dynasty, which consisted of not more than three reigns, two of them brief, the whole period covered by the dynasty being not much over thirty years.

It is to the reign of this Pedubast that the events narrated in the historical romance of the Rainer Papyrus are generally referred, though some authorities prefer to place them somewhat later.* The papyrus recounts how Ka-amenhotep, Prince of Mendes, had stolen a valuable breastplate, probably the golden funerary corselet, of Eiorhoreru, Prince of Heliopolis, so that the obsequies of the latter prince could not be completed. Pimay, the son of the dead prince, complains to King Pedubast; but Ka-amenhotep refuses to obey the king's orders, and, other chiefs being drawn into the dispute, the whole Delta becomes the scene of civil war. Pedubast, who is apparently quite powerless to prevent the fighting, succeeds, however, in regulating it. The two opposing forces are drawn up under their various chiefs, who are named, and the fighting goes on under observation of King Pedubast, until at last, when Ka-amenhotep's party seems to be getting the worst of it, and he himself is nearly killed by Pimay, the Mendesian yields to the repeated suggestions of the king, and restores the stolen corselet.

Whatever be the exact date of the narrative, this curious story of trial by combat, with the king as umpire over chiefs whom he is unable to control, gives us a

* At the time of Ashurbanipal's conquest of Egypt.

glimpse of the utterly disorganized state of the northern portion of the kingdom during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. The soldiers of fortune of the Delta had failed as utterly as the priest-kings of Thebes in the regeneration of Egypt. And now a fresh stock from the far south, known as the Ethiopian Dynasty, but in reality probably more truly Egyptian than the kinglets who had been misgoverning the Delta, was to endeavour to imbue the failing body of the Egyptian State with a fresh spirit.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE ETHIOPIAN PHARAOHS AND THE STRUGGLE WITH ASSYRIA

We have already seen that very early in the history of Egypt the Pharaohs began to extend their authority over the region south of the first cataract, known as Ethiopia, or Nubia—'Kush,' as the Egyptians called it; and we have traced the gradually advancing limits of the new province, until the frontier finally reached the fourth cataract. In the reign of Tahutmes I. the land of Ethiopia was incorporated with the Empire under a viceroy; while under Amenhotep II. the most southerly Egyptian station was the town of Napata, just below the fourth cataract. During the later and weaker period of the Empire, no doubt the extent of the province varied according to the firmness with which it was held; but, on the whole, Egypt maintained her grasp upon her great southern dependency much better than upon Syria.

Towards the close of the Twentieth Dynasty, however, the tenure began to change. Hitherto the viceroyalty of Ethiopia had been a civil appointment, and the 'royal son of Kush' had been sometimes a prince of the reigning house, sometimes a great official of the court; but towards the end of the reign of Ramses XII. Her-hor, the high-priest of Amen, appears as 'Viceroy of Kush,' and when he ascended the throne the viceregal title passed to his son Piankh. Thus Ethiopia became especially connected with Thebes, and with the Theban line of priest-kings.

During the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Dynasties there is evidence of repeated struggle between the rulers of Thebes and the Tanite and Bubastite Pharaohs, and it is not improbable that the royal and priestly family of Thebes may have been driven to take refuge beyond the cataracts. At all events, by 748 B.C. we find that there had arisen a regular kingdom of Ethiopia, whose capital was the town of Napata, already mentioned. This kingdom was fully organized on the Egyptian model. Its king calls himself 'Lord of the Two Lands,' exactly as if he had been a regular Pharaoh; its architecture, its writing, and its worship are all Egyptian, but it bears distinct marks of its priestly and Theban origin. Its god is Amen, the Lord of Thebes, and its government is an absolute theocracy—so much so that in its later period the king was the nominee of the priests of Amen, and could be obliged to abdicate, or even to take his own life, in obedience to the decree of the god.*

Exactly when or how this Nubian State came to establish its dominion over the rest of Egypt is unknown; but not long after the middle of the eighth century B.C. Piankhi I., the reigning sovereign, evidently claimed suzerainty over Egypt at least as far north as Herakleopolis. North of Herakleopolis the land was divided among local chiefs, among whom the most conspicuous were Tafnekht of Sais, in the western Delta, and Uasarkon III., of the Twenty-third Dynasty, who held Bubastis and its district; while Nemart of Hermopolis apparently also claimed independent rule.

The narrative of the events which led to the establishment of Ethiopian dominance over the whole land is given by Piankhi on the great stele, now in the Cairo Museum, which he erected at Napata in celebration of the conquest

* Reisner's excavations at Napata and Meroë have fully established the Egyptian character of the Ethiopian line.

of Lower Egypt. In his twenty-first year, he tells us, word came to him that Tafnekht of Sais had been making war on the other local rulers, and had made himself master of the entire western Delta, whose chiefs and governors were following him 'like hounds at his feet.' He had also mastered the eastern Delta, and was attacking Herakleopolis, whose chieftain, Pefdudubast, was holding out, but was closely blockaded. This report was quickly followed by another, which indicated that the movement was rapidly spreading southwards, for Nemart of Hermopolis had been obliged to join with Tafnekht. Piankhi thereupon sent orders to Puarma and Lamarsekni, his commanders in the north, bidding them blockade Hermopolis, and dispatched a large reinforcement northwards, giving the troops special instructions to reverence Thebes, the abode of their national god. Below Thebes the Ethiopian force met the fleet and army of Tafnekht advancing up the Nile, and in the engagement which followed the troops of the Saite ruler were routed with considerable loss. Pressing on northwards, the Ethiopians relieved Herakleopolis, and defeated the forces of Tafnekht and Nemart in two engagements, driving the former chief and his army back, with great slaughter, into the Delta. Nemart, however, managed to evade pursuit, and threw himself into his own town of Hermopolis, which was again blockaded.

The report of these operations was not in the least satisfactory to the Ethiopian king, whose object had been to cut Tafnekht off from his base in the difficult Delta country. 'Behold, His Majesty was furious at that account like a leopard. "What!" said he, "shall it be allowed to them that any remnant shall be left of the troops of the North? . . . I swear, so may Ra love me, so may my father Amen be gracious to me, I will sail down the Nile myself."'

On hearing of the king's anger, his penitent troops redoubled their exertions, taking town after town from Tafnekht's garrisons, and slaying the son of the Saite prince. 'Behold, they sent an account of this to His Majesty; his heart was not appeased by it.' Finally, after celebrating the New Year festival at Napata, and the great feast of Amen at Thebes, Piankhi himself took the field against Hermopolis. The town was already in the last straits, and the stench of unburied bodies was becoming unbearable. Three days after Piankhi's arrival Nemart sent out heralds offering submission, and yielding up even his crown jewels. Finding that this act of abasement was unavailing, he sent out his queen to plead with the ladies of Piankhi's harem for her husband's life, and this intercession proved successful. His personal safety being assured, Nemart surrendered the town, and the Ethiopian took possession, and made inspection of his conquest. Curiously enough, his main anger against the rebel prince was aroused by the fact that on entering Nemart's stables he found that the horses had been half starved during the blockade.

Piankhi now marched northwards again, receiving the homage of Pefdudubast, who had held Herakleopolis for him, and summoning town after town to surrender. The terms offered were merciful. 'Two ways are before you; choose as you will: open, and live; shut up, and die! His Majesty does not pass by any closed fort.' In most cases this summons was sufficient. 'Lo, they opened forthwith.' Memphis, however, proved stubborn. Its fortifications had been recently strengthened, and Tafnekht threw himself, with 8,000 troops, into the town by night, and after encouraging the townsfolk to resist, sailed off northwards to try and raise further reinforcements. Piankhi summoned the Memphites in very gentle terms. 'His Majesty loveth that Memphis be safe and sound,

and that even the children weep not.' But the appeal produced no effect.

Upon reconnoitring the city, its defences appeared so strong that there was much difference of opinion among the Ethiopian officers as to the best method of attack. Piankhi himself, however, had noticed the weak point. The Memphite ships lay ranged along the river-side wall, and as the river was high, their upper works overtopped the battlements. Piankhi sent in his own fleet, captured the Memphite vessels, and rapidly passing his soldiers across the captured ships, gained a lodgment on the walls, and swept over the city 'like a water-flood.' The slaughter was considerable, and many prisoners were taken. The storm of Memphis was followed by a general submission of the neighbouring princes. King Piankhi then visited the temple of Ra at Heliopolis, where he entered the Holy of Holies, and saw the god alone. 'Then he closed the doors, and set sealing-clay with the king's own signet, and enjoined the priests, saying, "I have set my seal; let no other king whatever enter therein."'

At Heliopolis Uasarkon III. of Bubastis came in, and acknowledged the supremacy of the Ethiopian; and his example was followed by a number of other kinglets. The stubborn Tafnekht still maintained himself for a year among the marshes of the Delta; but, finally, he also sent in a tender of submission, and, evidently fearing to trust himself personally in Piankhi's camp, offered to go to the temple of his own goddess Neit, and take an oath of purgation and allegiance. Piankhi accepted the offer of his vanquished rival, and Tafnekht swore fealty in the presence of two Ethiopian officials. Having now conquered the whole land, Piankhi returned home with great glory and much spoil.

Thus the ancient kingdom of the Pharaohs fell into the hands of an Ethiopian sovereign. It would probably be

a mistake, however, to suppose that this was a genuine negro conquest. Piankhi and his chief officers were doubtless as true Egyptians as the motley crowd to which they were opposed, though later some infusion of negro blood may have been found among the Ethiopian rulers, as is suggested by the pronouncedly negroid features of the portrait of Taharqa on Esarhaddon's Sinjirli stele. The inscription from which the details of Piankhi's campaign given above are quoted shows the Ethiopian conqueror to have been not only a soldier of some skill, but also a merciful and humane man, who had no delight in bloodshed, and whose sympathies were readily touched by suffering, whether of man or beast. Piankhi does not seem to have endeavoured to hold Egypt in close subjection, but to have been satisfied with the assertion of his overlordship. In spite of his oath, Tafnekht resumed his ambitious designs after the withdrawal of his conqueror, and apparently succeeded in establishing some sort of sovereignty over the Delta, for his son Bakenranf, or Bocchoris, is reckoned as the founder (and the sole king) of the Twenty-fourth Dynasty.

During the gradual decay of Egypt, and while its disorganized provinces were thus becoming the scene of the civil strifes of petty dynasts such as Tafnekht and Nemart, the great kingdom of Assyria had passed through a period of eclipse, and was entering upon a wider career of conquest. In the latter part of the reign of Piankhi, the renowned Ninevite king, Tiglath-Pileser III., had conquered Damascus, and exacted tribute from the kingdom of Israel. On the death of the great king, Hoshea, the last king of Israel, took advantage of the accession of Shalmaneser IV. to make a bid for freedom; and, encouraged by 'So (or Sua), King of Egypt,' to whom he had sent presents, he withheld the annual tribute, and revolted. Shalmaneser at once invaded Israel and

besieged Samaria; and though he died during the progress of the war, his successor, the mighty Sargon II., captured Samaria, after a three years' siege, in 722 B.C., and brought the kingdom of the Ten Tribes to an end. The object-lesson thus given had apparently little effect upon the kinglets of Palestine, who failed entirely to realize the profound modification of the balance of power, and the utter impotence of the decadent kingdom of Egypt to help them against the resistless might of Assyria. The glamour of the ancient monarchy of the Nile still blinded their eyes; they had not yet learned that 'Egypt helpeth in vain and to no purpose,' and the Pharaoh of the hour was always able to make trouble for Assyria by promises of help which he was utterly unable to fulfil.

In 720 B.C. Sargon had again to appear in Syria, and at Raphia he totally defeated the army of Hanun, King of Gaza, and Sib'e, the 'Tartan' or commander-in-chief of Egypt. The question of who So and Sib'e may have been is a very doubtful one; but it is at least possible that the two names are different forms of the same word, and that we are to understand by them Shabaka, the first king of the Twenty-fifth or Ethiopian Dynasty.* Shabaka was not actually king at either date; but he was acting as Regent of Egypt as early as 725 B.C., the Ethiopians having apparently reasserted their power over the Nile Valley. Tafnekht's son, Bakenranf, who disputed the sovereignty of the new ruler, is said to have been captured by Shabaka and burned alive. Shabaka followed the traditional Egyptian policy in Syria—a policy in which he evidently had a hand even before his accession to full kingship; but Sargon's power was too great for the alliances which the Egyptian king painfully formed ever to come to anything, while in Jerusalem the great prophet Isaiah steadily protested, by word and acted parable, against the folly of listening to the blandishments of the Ethiopian. 'They

* *See note on p. 307.*

shall be dismayed and ashamed, because of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this coast shall say in that day: Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the King of Assyria; and we, how shall we escape?' That the new Pharaoh had intercourse of some kind with the great Assyrian soldier-king may be presumed from the fact that seals with his name were found in the Royal Library at Nineveh. Beyond these facts little is known of Shabaka's brief reign, and the remains of his work in Egypt are of but trifling importance.

He was succeeded by Shabataka, who may have been his son, and shortly after this event Sargon died, and Sennacherib came to the throne of Assyria (705 B.C.). The change of sovereign roused the usual tempest among the vassal States of the Assyrian Empire. Marduk-baliddin (Merodach-Baladan) of Babylon rose in rebellion, and Sennacherib was forced to move against him. He succeeded in quelling the revolt; but already, as we see from Isaiah's account of Merodach-Baladan's embassy to Hezekiah, the Babylonian king had been stirring up the Palestinian princes. Tyre, Judah, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistine cities had united in a league against Assyria; and in the background, as usual, was the power of Egypt—a formidable shadow, of which it was not yet known how completely it lacked substance.

Sennacherib's movements were prompt. Marching down the coast, he captured all the coast towns, with the exception of Tyre, and, as he advanced towards Egypt, detached a force which devastated Judah, and laid siege to Jerusalem. At Altaqu he met the Egyptian army (701 B.C.), not under its king, but under the young prince Taharqa, who was destined for kingship. At last the two great empires of the ancient world stood face to face. But the conflict was no longer an equal one. Assyria

in her prime was met by Egypt in the last stage of decrepitude; and the result was what might have been foreseen, and was foreseen, by clear-sighted statesmen like Isaiah. The Egyptian host was completely routed, and the members of the Syrian league seemed destined to learn by bitter experience the truth of the scornful taunt of Sennacherib's envoy to Hezekiah: 'Thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: so is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to all who trust on him.' But some mysterious disaster, probably pestilence, overwhelmed the Assyrian army in the flush of its triumph, and the conquering Sennacherib was obliged to retreat from the frontiers of Egypt, to call in the column that was threatening Jerusalem, and to return hastily to Nineveh. We may conclude that Shabataka, not less than Hezekiah of Judah, felt the relief which had thus suddenly and unexpectedly arisen at the moment when Egypt, with a beaten army streaming back across her borders, lay bare to the dreaded Assyrian host. Of the remainder of the reign of Shabataka there is no record, save the statement of Manetho that Taharqa, leading an army from Ethiopia, deposed and slew the king and seized the throne.

The new king proved to be the most active and able of the singularly inefficient Ethiopian line. We have already seen him, before his accession, leading the Egyptian army to defeat at Altaqu—a somewhat menacing omen of his later destiny, in which he alternately provoked Assyria and fled from her vengeance. His stele at Tanis mentions that he was sent north from Napata in his twentieth year; that subsequently Amen placed all lands under his feet; and that his mother, from whom he had been parted for several years, came down the river to Tanis to see her son crowned, and rejoiced over his elevation. Taharqa's relationship to Shabataka is uncer-

tain; but he must have exercised power over some part of the realm during the reign of that king, and probably seized the whole land when Shabataka's power declined after his defeat by Sennacherib.

The earlier portion of his twenty-six years' reign was uneventful. Sennacherib's hands were full with the putting down of rebellion in Asia, and Taharqa had a brief breathing-space in which to gather his strength for what he must have recognized to be an inevitable struggle. But in 681 B.C. Sennacherib was assassinated, and after his son Esarhaddon had passed through the time of storm and stress which seemed inseparable from the Assyrian succession, he resolved to put an end to Egyptian interference in the affairs of his empire, and in 674 B.C. he appeared with his army on the Egyptian frontier. Taharqa was not unprepared, and the rival nations met on somewhat more equal terms than at Altaqu. If the Assyrian army was not defeated, at all events it was so roughly handled that Egypt was saved for the moment from the scourge of invasion. Esarhaddon, however, was not the man to be discouraged by a single check. Three years later he returned to the attack, and on this occasion Taharqa's forces failed to stem the steady pressure of the Assyrian power. They were defeated in four battles, and Taharqa fled southwards, leaving Esarhaddon to plunder Memphis, which he did with the usual Assyrian thoroughness. The conqueror did not venture up the Nile in pursuit of his vanquished rival, but contented himself with dividing up Lower Egypt into twenty principalities, over which he placed viceroys, the most prominent of whom was Nekau, or Necho, of Sais, probably a descendant of Tafnekht, and the progenitor of the Twenty-sixth or Saite Dynasty. As he returned to Nineveh, Esarhaddon ironically carved his triumphal stele side by side with that of Ramses II. at the Dog River, while he erected another

tablet at Sinjirli, where he is represented leading captive Baal, King of Tyre, and Taharqa, the latter being depicted with pronouncedly negroid features.

The dread of Assyrian power only lasted as long as the conqueror was present in person; and he had no sooner returned home than Taharqa advanced down the Nile again, and overthrew the government which had been established. In 668 B.C. Esarhaddon was obliged to march on Egypt again, but died on the way; and after a brief delay his successor Ashurbanipal took up the task of conquest. Taharqa was once more defeated below Memphis, and driven up the river. He was pursued by the Assyrians, and forced to abandon Thebes; but it is not certain that the ancient capital was actually taken, and certainly Ashurbanipal did not succeed in establishing Assyrian supremacy in Upper Egypt. He reappointed the twenty viceroys in the lower part of the country, and returned home. His back was scarcely turned before his vassals in the Delta began to plot against him; but on this occasion he was beforehand with them, and the insurrection was nipped in the bud. The ringleaders, Nekau of Sais, and Sharuludari, who may have been a native Assyrian, were sent as prisoners to Nineveh. Nekau, however, succeeded in making his peace with Ashurbanipal, and was restored to his kingdom of Sais.

Taharqa, dreading the vengeance which might be exacted for his share in the plot, fled, according to the Assyrian account, to Ethiopia. He still appears to have exercised sovereignty over Upper Egypt, though in his later days he resided, not at Thebes, but at Napata, where he died, probably in 667 B.C. His reign, though disastrous for Egypt, was marked by some public works of note. At Karnak he erected, or at least began, the colonnade in the court of the Bubastites, of which one great column is still standing (Plate XXIX., 2); while at

1. TEMPLE OF EDFU, FROM PYLON.

2. COURT OF BUBASTITES AND COLUMN OF TAHARQA, KARNAK.

Napata he built a large temple, whose ruins survive. His inscription at Medinet Habu claims for him sovereignty over Mesopotamia, Assyria, Kheta-land, Libya, and the eastern deserts. The veracity and value of the claim may be estimated by the story, just narrated, of his relations with Assyria. At Thebes his authority was delegated to the prince Mentuemhat, whose statue was found in the temple of Mut, and whose doings as restorer of the monuments of Thebes fall to be noticed in connection with the next reign.

During his last year Taharqa associated with himself the prince Tanutamen, who was the son of Shabaka; and on the death of the old king Tanutamen proceeded to assert his claim to the throne of all Egypt. There appears to have been some doubt as to his succession, for on a stele which was found at Napata he relates how he had a dream in which two serpents appeared, the one on his right hand and the other on his left. On consulting his magicians, they told him that the vision signified that he should be king of the lands of the south and the north. Tanutamen accordingly marched northwards, and having overcome the Assyrian viceroys, entered Memphis, and established himself there as king. His triumph was not of long duration. Ashurbanipal speedily appeared in force to avenge the insult thus offered to him. Tanutamen was driven out of Memphis, and fled to Thebes. But on this occasion the Assyrian king was determined to make an end. He marched upon Thebes, and Tanutamen retreated, leaving the unhappy city to its fate. 'I took the road after Tandamanu,' says Ashurbanipal, 'I went to Thebes, the strong city; he saw the approach of my mighty army, and he abandoned Thebes and fled to Kipkip. My bands took the whole of Thebes, in the service of Ashur and Ishtar; silver, gold, precious stones, the furniture of his palace, all that there was; costly and

beautiful garments, great horses, men and women, two lofty obelisks covered with beautiful carving . . . which were set up before the gate of a temple, I removed and brought to Assyria. I carried off spoils unnumbered.'*

The destruction of the most famous city of antiquity created a profound sensation among the surrounding peoples. It is thus described by the prophet Nahum, in his 'burden of Nineveh,' written when the Assyrian capital was on the verge of the same fate. 'Art thou better than No-amon [Thebes], that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about her; whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was of the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers. Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets; and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.' The Assyrian sack was the death-blow to the splendour of Thebes. Prince Mentu-emhat manfully endeavoured to repair the damage which the town had suffered, and narrates how, when the whole land was turned upside down by the invasion, he purified the temples, set up the cedar doors, and renewed all the temple furniture with gold and precious stones. But no restoration could give back vitality to the dying city. From this time onwards it steadily declined in importance, and gradually fell into more and more complete ruin.

With this unparalleled disaster ended the attempts of the Ethiopian Pharaohs to withstand the might of Assyria. Indeed, the task was one to which they were almost ludicrously inadequate. The meeting of the two great empires of the ancient world ought at least to have resulted in a stately tragedy; as it was, it came not far short of being a grim farce. Had the Egypt which met the Assyria

* 'Records of the Past,' i. 64, 65.

of Ashurbanipal been such as she was in the days of Tahutmes III., the result might perhaps have been doubtful, and at all events the struggle would have been worthy of the historic reputation of the great Empire of the Nile. But Egypt's day was done. She had to encounter the greatest military power of the old world; and she met it with her strength utterly broken by long disunion and misrule, and under the leadership of a set of incompetents who could only show their folly by provoking an anger which they were powerless to withstand. 'When the Assyrians turned upon their enemy, the Nubians were always beaten; and when the Assyrians followed them, they ran away. Sib'e the "Tartan" of Egypt ran away from Sargon, Tirhakah ran away from Esarhaddon and from Ashurbanipal, and Tanutamen ran away from Ashurbanipal.'*

It was a melancholy conclusion to a great story; and it was the real conclusion. A considerable period of prosperity still lay before the land, and Egypt was to experience a wonderful revival in power, in art, and in world-influence; but the Egypt of the Saite revival, whose story has still to be told, was not the old Egypt, but a new land, where all the ancient glories of the race were consciously imitated by kings who were introducing wholesale that Greek influence which was destined in the end to supersede them. The Egypt of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty is a land where native sovereigns hold sway by the aid of Greek mercenaries, and where Greek trade and thought are already beginning to prepare the way for that European dominance which succeeded the disastrous Persian period.

* Budge, 'History of Egypt,' vi. 170.

*Note to p.* 300.—Now that Winckler's theory of a North Arabian kingdom of Muṣri, to which most of the references in Scripture and elsewhere to Misraim or Egypt should be referred, seems to have finally passed into the Limbo of Vanity, there is no reason for hesitating to accept the natural identification of Pir'u of Muṣri with Pharaoh of Egypt, and of Sib'e with Shabaka.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SAITE REVIVAL AND THE PERSIAN CONQUEST

Among the viceroys appointed by the Assyrian conqueror to rule the northern portion of the land was, as we have seen, Nekau or Necho of Sais, probably a descendant of that Tafnekht who gave Piankhi the Ethiopian so much trouble. In the reign of Ashurbanipal, a revolt in the Delta resulted in Nekau being summoned to Nineveh along with a fellow-viceroy named Sharuludari. Nekau, however, managed to convince the Assyrian king of his loyalty, and was reinstated in his government of Sais, while his son, Psamtek, was made governor of Athribis. Nekau probably met his death in attempting to resist the advance of Tanutamen, on whose triumph Psamtek fled to Syria. Tanutamen's movement being finally suppressed, Psamtek was rewarded for his loyalty by being installed as master of Sais and Memphis. Assyria was now too busily employed with trouble on her own borders to be able to pay much attention to the affairs of Egypt. Babylon was, as always, a menace, and was soon to become more than a menace. The Arabian tribes were moving in support of the Babylonians, and Ashurbanipal was forced to send an expedition to hold them in check; while the great invasion of the Scythians, which wrought such devastation in Asia, was already threatening.

Accordingly, Psamtek was given a breathing-space in which to gather himself and consolidate his power; and

he took advantage of his opportunity with great astuteness. The story of the manner in which he broke down the resistance of the other vassal sovereigns of the Delta, and established his claim to the throne of the whole land, became the subject of legends which are narrated by Herodotus and Diodorus. Herodotus recounts how Psamtek was one of twelve kings who had divided the realm of Egypt between them, but to whom an oracle had declared that whoever of them should offer a libation in the temple of Vulcan (Ptah) out of a brazen bowl should be king of all Egypt. It so happened that the twelve kings were gathered together in the temple to make offering, when it was found that by accident the officiating priest had only provided eleven golden bowls for the libation; whereupon Psamtek, who stood last in the line, took off his brazen helmet and used it for his offering. The words of the oracle coming to the minds of the other kings, they realized that they had been over-reached by Psamtek, and therefore banished him to the swamps of the Delta, and, when he had been restored to his throne, banished him a second time. Petrie has pointed out that this part of the story probably arose from a canting derivation of the king's name, which in demotic might signify 'drinking-bowl-maker.' The rest of the legend, however, doubtless embodies actual historic fact. It goes on to narrate how the banished king was informed by another oracle that he should be restored by 'brazen men from the sea,' and that, while he was puzzling over this enigmatic prophecy, certain Ionian and Karian pirates, being driven by stress of weather to the Egyptian coast, landed arrayed in their brazen harness; whereupon it was reported to the king that certain brazen men were arisen out of the sea, and were ravaging the country. Psamtek, seeing the fulfilment of the condition of the oracle, employed these Greeks as mercenary soldiers, and

by their aid was enabled to gain the throne. He thereupon settled the Ionians and Karians in certain districts on either side of the Nile, near the Pelusiac mouth. The story of Diodorus is to much the same purpose.

In the main this legend represents actual history, and recounts how Psamtek gained dominion over Egypt by means of the Greek mercenaries whom he hired. The immense superiority of the Greek hoplites enabled him to make himself rapidly master of the whole country, and by 652 B.C. he had control of Thebes. He recognized, however, that the national centre of gravity had for ever passed away from the old southern capital, and made no attempt to establish his court at Thebes. Instead, he caused his daughter Neitaqert or Nitokris to be adopted by Shepenapt, the sister of Taharqa, who was high-priestess of Amen at Thebes; and having thus secured to his own line the control of the fortune of the god, still, no doubt, large, in spite of successive depletions, he set up the seat of government at his own town of Sais, in the Delta.

Having gained his kingdom by the power of Greek arms, Psamtek settled his Ionians and Karians in a great fortified camp at Daphnæ, the Biblical Tahpanhes, on the eastern frontier of the Delta; a similar camp at Marea, on the west, guarded against any invasion from the Libyan side; while the old Libyan soldier class seems to have been moved from the Delta to a garrison at Elephantine, on the southern frontier of his kingdom. Psamtek had to deal with two great difficulties in his government. The first was the power of the surviving princelets, who had long been used to practical independence, and whose strife and misgovernment had been a curse to the country. These men were disposed of, some by the strong hand, and others by depriving them of their hereditary rights, so that, though continued in their titles, they held their

authority at the king's pleasure. The solution was much the same as that reached by the Twelfth Dynasty sovereigns in their dealings with the feudal barons of that time, and was apparently quite successful.

His second difficulty was the jealousy cherished towards the Greek mercenaries by the native soldiery. Herodotus and Diodorus both relate how he had to deal with revolts of these men. Herodotus tells us that 240,000 of them, having been kept on duty unrelieved for three years on the southern frontier, deserted in a body, and when expostulated with by the king, who besought them to remember their wives and children, answered that men could easily find wives and children wherever they went. Diodorus ascribes the revolt to the fact that Psamtek in one of his battles had put the native troops on the left wing, giving to the Greeks the place of honour on the right; but in other respects his story is the same. No doubt there is a good deal of imagination in the narrative, especially with regard to the numbers involved in the revolt, which are manifestly preposterous; but it is not at all unlikely that it rests on a substratum of fact, and that the king may have had trouble with the native troops owing to his preference for the more efficient Greeks.

These tales of the Greek historians put before us the outstanding feature of the Saite rule—the growing influence of the Greeks upon Egypt. The 'brazen men from the sea' were quickly followed by Greek merchants, who established an active trade between Egypt and their own land. Greek colonies sprang up in the chief cities, and Greek travellers and students began to penetrate the wonderful land which had been opened to their restless and inquisitive genius. From now onwards a good deal of the material of our knowledge of Egypt comes from Greek sources; and while its character is sometimes such as to suggest that the grave Egyptians quietly played

a little upon the receptiveness of their nimble-minded visitors, it is evident that the land was really an object of huge interest, and was diligently studied.

It is unfortunate that no fuller records exist of the manner in which Psamtek succeeded in converting the broken and ruined Egypt of the Ethiopian debacle into the prosperous land of the Saite revival; but the mere fact that he accomplished a practical regeneration shows him to have been a ruler of great wisdom and force of character. The prosperity of the country is evidenced by the magnificence of the private monuments of the time—the tomb of Pedu-amen-apt at Thebes, for example, far exceeds in size those of the greatest Egyptian kings; and the Greek tourists were amazed at the evidences of wealth and luxury which met them on every hand.

Such a vast work of reconstruction as lay before Psamtek can have left him but little time or opportunity for foreign adventure. Nevertheless, he seems to have made some attempt to regain the Egyptian Empire in Syria; for Herodotus states that he besieged the Philistine town of Ashdod for twenty-nine years, and finally took it. This is probably a somewhat distorted version of the actual facts; and it is likely that this siege, of such unheard-of duration, represents the struggle of the Saite king with the Scythian hordes who were devastating Syria at this time. Herodotus says that the Scythians advanced into Palestine, and were met by 'Psammitichos, King of Egypt,' who by prayers and presents diverted them from proceeding further, and that 'for twenty-eight years the Scythians governed Asia.' The statement accords ill with the character alike of Psamtek and of the Scythian invaders. It is much more probable that the Egyptian king held back the invasion by force within the Palestinian border, and that during the twenty-eight years of Scythian occupancy the frontier was at Ashdod; while in the

twenty-ninth year Psamtek was at last able to drive back the invaders beyond the Ashdod line. Such an explanation would reasonably cover both the statements of Herodotus.

No further military exploits are recorded of a reign which, despite the warlike character of its beginnings and the mercenary support on which the king relied,' was essentially one of peaceful development and commercial activity. The chief architectural works of Psamtek were

FIG. 41.—HEAD OF PSAMTEK I.

at Sais, and have suffered the fate which awaited most buildings in the often-ravaged Delta. At Saqqara he added a large gallery with side-chambers to the Serapeum. The ruins of the fort which he established at Daphnæ for the Greek mercenaries were discovered by Petrie in 1886, and will fall to be mentioned again in the time of Haa-ab-ra. Psamtek died in 610 or 609 B.C., after a reign of fifty-four years, during which he had succeeded in the most remarkable manner in transforming an apparently moribund nation into a prosperous and powerful State. He had done so, however, by introducing and fostering new elements which were destined to work a profound change on the character of the nation and on its relations to

the rest of the world. The very portrait of the king suggests the new spirit and the new ideals of his reign (Fig. 41). It exhibits no longer the stately reserve and repose of the great monarchs of the Empire, but presents us with what is obviously a genuine life-study of a bustling, prosperous, pushful, and not particularly attractive man of the world. Pharaoh has plainly ceased to be a god, even to his sculptor; he is a shrewd business man, prompt to push the interests of his own national firm, and to snatch his own advantage out of the troubled welter of world-politics.

Psamtek was succeeded by his son Nekau II. (610-594 B.C.), whose reign was marked by a serious attempt on the part of Egypt to resume her ancient position as mistress of Syria. Assyria was now hastening to its doom. The power of the great Ninevite State had been severely shaken by the Scythian invasion; and now the forces of the Babylonians under Nabopolassar, and of the Medes under Kyaxares, were pressing hard upon the tottering empire. Deeming the opportunity favourable, Nekau determined to make a bid for the dominion of Syria. Gathering a large army, he marched north along the old war-path of Tahutmes and Ramses till he reached Megiddo, which was now to be the scene of Egypt's last victory in Asia, as it had been that of her first. At Megiddo he was confronted by the army of Judah under the king Josiah, who evidently felt it to be his duty to oppose the enemy of his Assyrian suzerain. Nekau's expostulation with Josiah proved fruitless, and the battle which ensued naturally resulted in the defeat of the Jewish army, while Josiah himself was mortally wounded, and died shortly after at Jerusalem.

From Megiddo Nekau marched to the Euphrates, in the expectation of meeting his real adversary there; but Assyria was too far gone to resent even such an insult, and Nekau returned, having met with no opposition save in the skirmish at Megiddo. On his homeward journey

he dethroned Jehoahaz, who had succeeded his father Josiah, and carried him prisoner to Egypt, setting up as king in Jerusalem Eliakim, another of Josiah's sons, whose name he changed to Jehoiakim. The kingdom of Judah was laid under tribute to the conqueror, and for the moment it seemed as though the lordship of Syria had passed once more, and with amazing ease, to Egypt.

The conquest, however, was purely illusory; and Nekau's hold upon Syria only lasted till a real opponent was forthcoming to contest the supremacy he had so lightly gained. Nineveh quickly succumbed to the combined assault of the Babylonians and the Medes. In the division of the conquered territory the southern portion was given to Babylon, and when Nekau marched north again, four years after his first campaign, he found himself confronted by an enemy much more formidable than poor Josiah and his little army. He was met at Carchemish by the Babylonian forces under the crown prince Nebuchadrezzar, and, in spite of his Greek mercenaries, was utterly routed. The deep impression made upon the nations whose destiny was at stake upon the struggle of the two great powers is reflected in the passage in which the prophet Jeremiah describes the defeat of the great Egyptian army: 'Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-necho King of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar King of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah King of Judah. Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle. Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines. Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: for fear was round about, saith the Lord. . . . Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he

saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof. Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians that handle and bend the bow. . . . Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee.'

This crushing defeat effectually put an end to Nekau's dream of conquest. 'The King of Egypt came not again any more out of his land; for the King of Babylon had taken, from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the King of Egypt.' Nekau's energies, thus diverted from foreign adventure, were turned to the development of the internal resources of his kingdom. He began the excavation of a canal from the eastern Delta to the Red Sea. The canal was of considerable size, being four days' sail in length, and of such breadth as to admit of two triremes passing one another. But after losing 120,000 men, so Herodotus states, in the prosecution of his enterprise, he abandoned it, being told by an oracle that he was only working for the benefit of the foreigner. Another tradition ascribes the abandonment of the undertaking to the fact that the king was advised by his engineers that the level of the Red Sea was higher than that of the Delta, and that he was thus running the risk of flooding the country. The canal thus abandoned was afterwards completed by Darius I., re-dug by Trajan in the second century of our era, and again opened up under Mohammedan rule in A.D. 640.

Another maritime enterprise associated with the name of Nekau was the circumnavigation of Africa. He sent out an expedition from the Red Sea under Phœnician captains, and after a voyage of more than two years, they passed the Straits of Gibraltar and reached Egypt again.

Herodotus reports, but does not credit, the statement of the navigators that as they sailed round Africa, or Libya, as he calls it, they had the sun on their right hand—a fact which obviously indicates that they had really doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and sailed up the West Coast of Africa. Nekau kept a fleet of triremes in the Red Sea, and the docks for their accommodation were still remaining when Herodotus visited Egypt in the Persian period, and were then seen by him.

The brief reign of Nekau's son, Psamtek II. (594-589 B.C.) is unmarked by any incident of importance. An expedition was made into Nubia by a mixed force of Greek and native Egyptian soldiers, the Greeks being commanded by Potasimto, and the Egyptians by Amasis, a man who was destined to rise to prominence in the next reign. The troops penetrated at least as far as Abu Simbel, and have left traces of their presence in the shape of a Greek inscription carved on the leg of one of the colossi of Ramses II. in front of the great rock-temple.

Psamtek II. was succeeded by his son Haa-ab-ra, the Pharaoh Hophra of the Bible, and the Apries of the Greek historians (589-570 B.C.). The first event of his reign was an attempt at intervention in the affairs of Palestine, which ended disastrously for the little kingdom of Judah, and brought about its final overthrow. Already in the reign of Nekau Nebuchadrezzar had been obliged to invade Palestine and besiege Jerusalem, whose king, Jehoiachin, surrendered himself in order to avert the sack of his capital. He was carried prisoner to Babylon, along with the pick of the Hebrew population; and his uncle, Zedekiah, was placed on the throne in his stead. But Egyptian intrigue was always busy in Syria, and on the accession of Haa-ab-ra the weak Jewish king revolted against Babylon, contrary to the wise advice of Jeremiah, who fully realized the folly of trusting in Egyptian

promises of help. Long before, Isaiah had said of the Egypt of his time, 'Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her "Rahab that sitteth still."' And Hezekiah's experience of the cowardice of the southern power was to be repeated, with more disastrous consequences, by the last king of Judah. Nebuchadrezzar promptly put his army in motion to crush the revolt, and the combination of little States which opposed him quickly fell to pieces. He beleaguered Jerusalem, and though Haa-ab-ra ventured north with an army to the help of his unfortunate tool, he did not dare to risk an engagement. 'Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you,' said Jeremiah, 'shall return to Egypt, unto their own land;' and the event was in accordance with the prophet's foresight.

In 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell, and after Zedekiah had been blinded and carried captive to Babylon, the remnant of the people, under Johanan, the son of Kareah, migrated to Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them. There they found refuge at the frontier fort of Daphnæ, the camp of the Greek mercenaries, which is still locally known as 'the Castle of the Jew's Daughter'; and there Jeremiah, in one of those acted parables which accompanied some of his prophecies, 'took great stones, and hid them in the clay of the paved area which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes,' prophesying that Nebuchadrezzar would spread his royal pavilion over them. This paved area was found by Petrie during his clearing of the site of the fort at Daphnæ in 1886. The Babylonian invasion of Egypt was, however, postponed, for Nebuchadrezzar had on his hands the long siege of Tyre, which held out for thirteen years, and only capitulated in 573 B.C.

Haa-ab-ra did not relinquish his hopes of Syrian conquest without another effort to realize them, in which he had some slight success. His fleet engaged and defeated

the Phœnician and Cyprian fleets, capturing Sidon, and even Cyprus, according to Diodorus; but his successes were not productive of any permanent result.

On his western frontier he now became involved in the conflict which ultimately brought about his overthrow. The Greek colonists of Cyrene were encroaching upon the territories of the Libyan chief Adikran, who appealed to Egypt for help. Haa-ab-ra sent against the Cyrenæan Greeks an army of native Egyptians, who, carelessly despising their adversary, were overthrown in battle with great slaughter. The beaten troops became possessed with the idea that Haa-ab-ra had designed their overthrow, and had sent them on the expedition in order to get rid of them. Accordingly they revolted, and when Haa-ab-ra sent Aahmes or Amasis to quell the revolt, they hailed him as king, and he, apparently nothing loth, accepted the nomination. Haa-ab-ra sent another envoy, Patarbemis, to bring the rebels to reason; but Amasis returned the significant and insolent answer that he was coming at once to see the king, and would bring company with him. On hearing this reply, Haa-ab-ra was seized with a fit of rage which found vent upon the unfortunate Patarbemis, whose nose and ears were cut off by the king's orders. The sight of this mad act of injustice so incensed the remaining native supporters of the king that they deserted him, and joined the rebels under Amasis. Haa-ab-ra had still his Greek mercenaries, and with 30,000 of them he marched upon the rebel army. A great battle ensued, and after a stout resistance the Greeks, greatly outnumbered, were beaten, and the king was taken. He was not dethroned, however, but was forced to accept Amasis as joint sovereign with himself; and for awhile the kings reigned together, the real power, of course, lying with the conqueror. But finally, having attempted to regain his authority by the help of his

faithful Greeks, Haa-ab-ra was defeated on two occasions by his rival, and was slain while watching a skirmish from his galley.

Amasis (570-526 B.C.) thus became sole king, and, as he owed his elevation to the jealousy cherished by the native Egyptians towards the Greeks, he was obliged to make at least some show of concession to that feeling. He therefore restricted the Greek immigrants to the single town of Naukratis, obliging them to give up the settlements which they had formed at Daphnæ and elsewhere. Naukratis, hitherto a place of no very great importance, quickly became a great trading centre. Its remains, explored within recent years, show it to have been occupied by representatives of a number of Greek communities, who combined to erect the great temple of the town, the Hellenion, while separate sanctuaries were erected by several of the other Hellenic States. The manufactures of the town seem to have been almost entirely of Greek type; and possibly it may be believed that the action of Amasis in thus restricting the Greeks to a single settlement was not really so much of a blow to Hellenic influence in Egypt as it was intended by the astute king to appear to his native supporters.

Meanwhile Nebuchadrezzar had disposed of the resistance of Tyre, and in 568 B.C. had marched into the eastern Delta. The extent of his success against Amasis is not known, though he may at least have fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy with regard to Daphnæ; but certainly there was no conquest of the land such as had resulted from the Assyrian invasions. The danger which lay ahead of Egypt was not from Babylon, whose lease of power was destined to be short. Already the Persian was threatening the disturbance of the whole East, and Amasis made preparation to meet what he foresaw to be the inevitable conflict. He allied himself with Krœsos of

Lydia, Nabunahid of Babylon, Polykrates of Samos, and the Spartans, established a strong fleet on the eastern Mediterranean, and succeeded in making Cyprus tributary to Egypt.

The Persian storm, however, did not burst upon Egypt in his days. His long reign of forty-four years was mainly peaceful, and was marked by great commercial and artistic activity, relics of his work being found at Sais, Nebesheh, Memphis, Abydos, and elsewhere. Greek influence, nominally restricted, was really growing rapidly. The Greeks began to take more and more interest in the strange land of the Nile, and one of the laws of Amasis, which decreed that every inhabitant of the country should annually declare to the governor of his district by what means he maintained himself, was adopted by Solon, the great lawgiver of Athens, in his code. Outwardly, perhaps, Egypt never seemed more prosperous than during the latter part of the reign of Amasis. The king was a man of great personal attractiveness and prudence, and strongly impressed his Greek visitors by the sagacity and temper with which he handled and controlled the conflicting elements in his kingdom. But he himself must have been well aware that the future was ominous in the extreme.

The Persian menace hung like a dark thunder-cloud along the whole horizon. Already the rumblings of the coming storm had been heard. Nebuchadrezzar's death had removed the one great barrier to the extension of Persian power. Cyrus of Anshan overthrew the Medes, and added their strength to his own in 550 B.C.; and henceforward his meteoric career was watched with dread by the cowering nations. Not long after Amasis had allied himself with Krœsos the Lydian king was overthrown. Six years later Nabunahid, the last King of Babylon, was beaten, and the mighty city itself was captured (539 B.C.). It was obviously only a matter of time till

Egypt should share the fate of her allies. Indeed, it might have been better for both Persia and Egypt had the great conqueror been spared to complete his work. But Cyrus, as well as Amasis, had passed away before the time was ripe for the invasion of Egypt; and when the Ionians and Karians of Psamtek III. were at length broken, after a stout resistance, at Pelusium (525 B.C.), it was Egypt's miserable lot to fall into the hands, not of a wise and clement conqueror like Cyrus, but of the cruel and half insane Cambyses.

Thus disastrously the long and wonderful story of the Pharaohs came to its close. The glory had departed from the world's most ancient and long-enduring monarchy; for though there still lay before Egypt a time of no small prosperity under the Ptolemies, the independent history of the land ended with the Battle of Pelusium. Henceforward Egypt is merely a counter in the great game of world-conquest, passing almost passively from the hand of the Persian to that of Alexander the Great, and from the hand of the Ptolemaic Dynasty to the iron grip of Rome.

The outstanding characteristic of the national life under the sway of the dynasty which, not altogether ingloriously closed the long roll of Egyptian rulers, was, strangely enough, a casting back to the ancient models of art and literature, as though the genius of Egypt were singing its swan-song. It was not even to the great days of the Empire that the artists and writers of the Saite revival turned for inspiration. They went back to the times of the Pyramid-Builders, and consciously endeavoured to reproduce the spirit of the masterpieces of the old days of Khufu and Menkaura. The reliefs in the tombs of the period are close imitations of those of the Old Kingdom, and sometimes absolute copies of them, as in the case of that Theban Aba of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty who adorned his tomb with reproductions of the reliefs from

the tomb of an Old Kingdom Aba of Siut simply, to all appearance, because of the similarity in name.

The most notable illustration of the sway which this renascence of old ideas had over the Egyptian mind in Saite times is given by the magnificent tomb of Peduamen-apt, already mentioned. This enormous tomb, which is nearly 900 feet in length, far exceeding any of the royal tombs, carefully copies all the characteristic features of the early Empire tombs, and its walls are covered with a new recension of the Pyramid Texts, while the arrangement of its chambers and chapels is calculated for the express purpose of permitting the ceremonies belonging to the ritual of these texts to be performed in every detail according to the ancient customs. Such a piece of conscious archaism is a significant indication of the wonderful fascination which the period of Egypt's earliest glories exercised over the minds of men in the last flicker of her splendour.

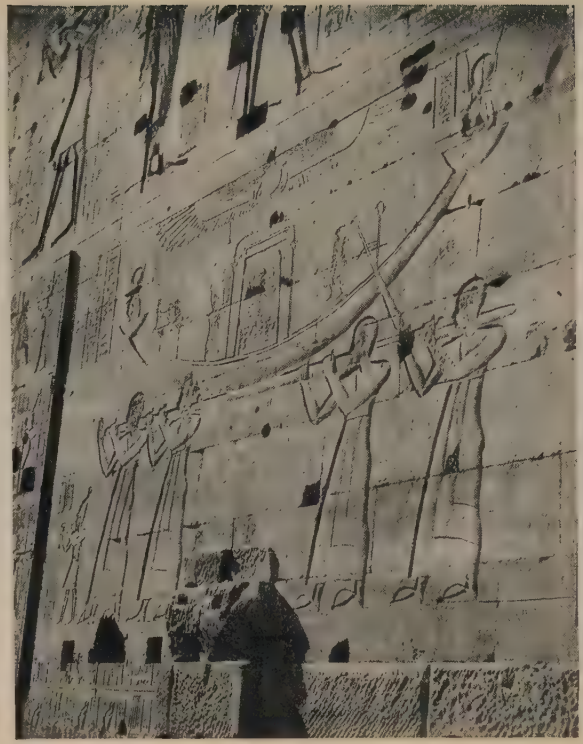
In religious matters an attempt was also made to revert to original ideas, and the foreign accretions were studiously purged out of the Egyptian Pantheon. The weird representations of the underworld which mark the tombs of the Nineteenth Dynasty are quite superseded, giving place to the naïve pictures of daily life and work which used to adorn the old mastabas. In the recension of the 'Book of the Dead' which belongs to this period there are evident traces of the same archaistic influence which was at work everywhere.

In statuary work the artists of the Saite period were by no means slavishly imitative. Their work is based upon ancient models, but has a freeness and suppleness of style which is foreign to the reserved manner of the Old Kingdom sculptor, though it falls below the old work in being too much elaborated, and loses some of its strength in an effort after exaggerated smoothness and finish. Some of

the portrait statues of the period are marked by clever appreciation of the characteristic features of their subjects, and are handled with great dexterity and mastery of the intractable materials employed. The art of casting in bronze was brought to a high degree of perfection, and the specimens of Egyptian bronze-work which survive mostly date from this time.

In architecture comparatively little remains to witness to the activity of the Saite princes and their architects; but it is evident from such statements as that of Herodotus, in which he speaks of the tomb of Psamtek I., at Sais, as having been adorned by pillars with palm-leaf capitals, that the builders of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty were already reaching out towards that freer and richer style of adornment which produced the highly ornate colonnades of the Ptolemaic and Græco-Roman periods (Plate XXIX., 1, and Plate XXX., 2).

It was as yet impossible for the archaic Greek art of the time to exercise any marked influence upon the long-established Egyptian tradition; and probably the Greek colonists and visitors for a time learned from Egypt more than they taught her. But the Saite rulers had introduced the germ of that wonderful art and literature which were so speedily to dominate the mind of the ancient world; and with the Twenty-sixth Dynasty the history of purely Egyptian art, as well as the country's existence as an independent factor in world-history, may be said to have closed.



1. SACRED BARK, PHILÆ.

2. CAPITALS OF COLUMNS, PHILÆ.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT EGYPT

THERE is no nation whose surviving literary documents contain such a large proportion of texts relating to religion as do the Egyptian inscriptions. 'It may be said boldly,' remarks Steindorff, 'that quite nine-tenths of the Egyptian writings preserved to us were devoted to some religious purpose, and that of the remaining tenth the bulk contains more or less information on religion.' The mass of material is enormous, and at first sight it would seem as though we were unusually favourably placed for a study of the religion of Ancient Egypt. As a matter of fact, the reverse is the truth. Of the immense bulk of religious literature which has come down, a great part is mere repetition from fifty sources, of what is already known from fifty other sources; a great part is devoted to one single aspect of religion; and, above all, we have no systematic account of the religion from any source whatsoever. No document giving a unified conception of Egyptian religion has been preserved; nor have we any reason to believe that such a document ever existed. The Egyptian, in all probability, never dreamed of such a thing as a system of religion. Ideas, for example, concerning the future life, which were absolutely inconsistent with one another, lay side by side in his mind, and were recorded in his sacred books, without his making the least attempt to reconcile them or to remove their discordances,

and, so far as can be judged, without his realizing that they were inconsistent. The same thing is true of his thoughts concerning the cosmogony, where several different strata are to be traced, mutually incompatible, yet none of them abandoned for that reason; while in his beliefs concerning the gods themselves there was the same coexistence of several different cycles of theological ideas.

From the earliest period the race was, as we have seen, a very composite one; and it would appear as though each branch of the resultant people had brought its own contribution of religious thought, and each contribution had simply been added to those already received, without any inquiry being made as to whether it agreed or disagreed with previous notions. 'A strange curse lay on the Egyptians,' says Erman, 'they could not forget. At the earliest period writing had been discovered by them, and had placed them in the front rank of the nations, but the price of this remained to be paid. Every fresh epoch of their long existence brought them new ideas, but the earlier ideas did not disappear in consequence. . . . In this way the confusion of ideas, natural and local, old and new, increased with every successive period, and added to the mass of religious details that rejoiced the Egyptian theologians, but which we regard with horror.' The result is that the Egyptian mind had an aggregate of religious ideas, but can scarcely be said to have had a religion. The nearest approach to such a thing was the cycle of beliefs and observances connected with the name of Osiris; but even in this we can discern different strata of thought which have never been brought into unity by any systematic theologian.

We have seen that in the Eighteenth Dynasty an attempt was made by Akhenaten to introduce a really coherent system, and to substitute for the congeries of ancient gods and the mass of inconsistent legends a

single deity and a unity of worship; but the attempt resulted in a disastrous failure, and the reaction left the mass of inconsistencies more firmly based than ever. It is therefore quite impossible to give any coherent account of Egyptian religion, and in all probability always will be impossible. All that can be done is to sketch in brief

FIG. 42.—HATHOR OF DENDERAH.

outline the ideas which the Egyptians cherished with regard to the most important of their numberless gods, to recount the legends by which they accounted for the existent frame of things, and to give some account of those views with regard to the life after death which played so great a part in their mental outlook, and so profoundly influenced their conduct.

From the beginning of his history the Egyptian never had any uniformity of religion. The original theological

unit was the local god. Each district, each town, even each village, possessed its own local divinity, the 'lord of the district,' or the 'urban god,' who was supposed to attend to its interests, to be its defender, and to provide it with all blessings. So much was this the case that, though these gods had their own individual names, they were frequently designated merely by the title of the city over whose destinies they presided. Thus Horus of Edfu was frequently referred to simply as 'He of Edfu.' Among the chief of these local gods were such deities as Ptah of Memphis, Min of Koptos, Khnum of Elephantine, and Amen of Thebes; while the local goddesses numbered among them Neit of Sais, Hathor of Denderah, and Bast of Bubastis.

In the course of time the original purely local functions of these deities were modified by the ascription to certain of them of particular powers and tendencies. Thus, Min of Koptos, whose locality lay close to the great road leading from the Red Sea to the Nile Valley, became the protector of roads, travellers, and herds; Sekhmet of Memphis assumed the attributes of a warlike goddess; and Hathor of Denderah (Fig. 42) became the Goddess of Pleasure and Joy. The divinity had to be conceived of as manifesting himself in some shape or form, and it was in this detail that some of the most conspicuous peculiarities of the Egyptian religious thought declared themselves. Some of the forms assumed by the gods are of a very simple and primitive character, and point to an origin very far back in antiquity. Thus, Min was revealed in the shape of a heap of stones, and Osiris of Dedu or Busiris under the form of a rough stake, or pillar with a quadruple capital, while several deities were connected with trees. A more common type, however, was that in which the god was represented in the form of some animal which was supposed to be possessed in an eminent

degree of that characteristic which was the leading attribute of the god in question. Amen of Thebes, originally a God of Fertility and Generation, was frequently represented as a ram ; Tahuti or Thoth, the God of Wisdom and Letters, was pictured in the form of a baboon or an ibis ; Sekhmet, who represented the destroying heat of the sun, was a lioness ; and Anubis, the God of Departing Souls, was typified under the form of the jackal which haunts the cemeteries. The best-known of the animal representations of the gods are the two sacred bulls, Apis of Memphis and Mnevis of Heliopolis. The bull was the type of the fighting and reproductive power, and the great creator-god Ptah was supposed to be incarnate in the Apis bull, while Mnevis was an incarnation of Ra, the sun-god of Heliopolis. Divine honours were accorded to both these animals, and in the case of the Apis, the magnificent tombs of the Apis bulls, with their colossal stone sarcophagi, still survive in the Serapeum near Saqqara, to testify to the importance of this cult. The soaring flight of the hawk, as well as his fierceness, marked this bird out as a fitting emblem of divinity, and several gods are represented as hawks—Horus and Ra, different forms of the sun-god, Mentu, the war-god of Hermonthis, and others, being examples of this incarnation.

At a very early stage in the historic period, however, this somewhat crude mode of representation began to be modified and superseded by an anthropomorphic type. The gods were depicted as having the forms of men or women. Their heads were crowned with tall plumes, and as symbols of authority they carried a sceptre or a general's staff, the goddesses bearing instead papyrus-stalks. In many cases those deities which had been represented by animal forms now assumed a strange composite form, wearing the body of a man or woman in conjunction with the head of the particular animal typical of their

nature. The most incongruous combinations are thus effected. Sebek, the crocodile-god of the Fayum, appears as a man with a crocodile's head; Bast of Bubastis, as a woman with a cat's head; while Heqt, the Goddess of Birth, combines a frog's head with a woman's body—all which seems, of course, sufficiently absurd to us. It is nevertheless to be remembered that the absurdity was not so great as appears on the surface, the animal figure, or the combination of human form and animal head, being merely the symbol of the particular principle or manifestation of power which was represented by the god in question. Reverence for the sacred animals became a craze in the later periods; but we have always to distinguish between the corruptions and the debasing materialisms which are excrescences upon a religion and the purer conception upon which these have foisted themselves.

(Of the animal-headed gods, the most important are the following: Khnum, who is a creator-god, and the god of the cataract. He is fabled to have made man upon a potter's wheel, and is generally represented with the head of a ram. Tahuti, or Thoth, the God of Writing and Learning. He is almost always figured with the head of an ibis (Fig. 45). The baboon is also an emblem of his; but he is never figured with a baboon's head. Sekhmet, who represents the fierce heat of the sun, bears the head of a lioness (Fig. 43), while Bast, who is a Goddess of Joy, is cat-headed. Anubis, the patron of the dead, wears the head of the jackal, guardian of the cemetery (Fig. 44). Horus, the hawk-god of Upper Egypt, is generally represented with the head of a hawk, though later he becomes mingled with the Osiris myth, and is frequently depicted as the human son of Isis. Set, his great rival, who represents the warfare of evil against good, bears the head of a strange fabulous animal with upright ears. In

the class of human gods, the two chief groups are those of the Osiris legend and the Theban triad. The Osiris group embraces Osiris, Isis, Nephthys, and Horus; while the Theban triad consists of Amen, Mut, and Khonsu. In this class should also be mentioned Neit of Sais, a Goddess of Hunting and Weaving, and also of War, whose cult was prominent in the very early period and again during the time of the Saite revival. Apart from these

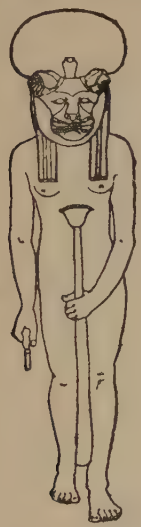


FIG. 43.—SEKHMET.

FIG. 44.—ANUBIS.

stands the group of nature-gods. The chief of this group is the sun-god, Ra, Atum, or Khepera, represented sometimes by the winged disc, sometimes by a hawk-headed man with the solar disc crowning his head. Subordinate to him are Nut, the embodiment of heaven, represented as a female figure studded with stars, or sometimes as a cow; Seb, the earth-god, pictured as a recumbent male figure, over whom Nut arches her body; and Shu, the God of Space, who separates Nut from Seb. Of those

gods whose function it is to embody abstract ideas, we need only mention Ptah, the creator divinity, figured as a mummy; Min, the male principle, represented by a tightly swathed male figure, bearing a scourge and adorned with lofty plumes; Hathor, the female principle, pictured as a woman whose face is surrounded by two broad plaits of hair, and who wears cow's ears (Fig. 42), or who bears a head-dress consisting of two horns with the solar disc between them; and Maat, the Goddess of Truth (Plate XXIV.), a female figure who is crowned with an upright feather, and bears in her hand the '*ankh*' or *crux ansata*, the emblem of life.

In process of time the multitude of local gods began to diminish in importance, and a few great groups of gods began to detach themselves from the common herd of divinities and to assume pre-eminence. The manner in which this happened was simple and natural. As one particular district or city grew in importance, it absorbed other communities, and with them their local divinities, while on the other hand its success was naturally held to indicate the power of its god, and therefore led to a desire on the part of other communities to identify their local deity with a god so powerful. Thus the process of simplification was carried out in two ways. The community which had been absorbed in its larger neighbour brought with it its local god or goddess, and a place had to be found for this deity by the side of the great god of the larger community, and thus there grew up a kind of divine family of the city, which, for some reason, was generally arranged as a triad or trinity. At Memphis the triad was formed by Ptah, the great creator-god, Sekhmet his wife, and Nefertum their son. At Thebes the group consisted of Amen, his wife Mut, and Khonsu, the moon-god; while a somewhat differently composed triad was that of Elephantine, where Khnum, the cataract-god, had for

his companions the goddesses Sati and Anukit. On the other hand, a process of identification went on, other districts desiring to assimilate their deity to a god whose power and influence were manifestly great and growing. The most notable instance of this is afforded by the worship of the sun-god.

This deity had always had more or less of a general sway, as was natural, and under the title of Horus had been worshipped pretty generally over the land in addition to being localized in various cities. From the time of the Fifth Dynasty, however, he began to assume fresh importance from the fact that the reigning line claimed to be descended from Ra, the sun-god of Heliopolis, and thenceforward not only was he extensively worshipped under various titles, as Ra, Atum, Khepera or Horus, but other divinities, who originally had nothing whatever to do with Ra, were identified with him. Amen of Thebes became Amen-Ra; even Sebek, the water-god of the Fayum, was looked upon as another form of the great solar god, and Khnum of the cataract shared the same fate. The worship of Ra remained one of the outstanding cults of the Egyptian religion during almost the whole historic period, though, from the time of the rise of Thebes, the Heliopolitan form of his worship was superseded in importance by the Theban, in which Amen, the Lord of Thebes, became Amen-Ra, the great national god of the Empire. The other deity who shared supremacy with him, or perhaps held even a greater place in the national affection, was Osiris, to whose cult attention must be directed later.

The Heliopolitan priesthood, generally recognized as being the most learned of the Egyptian priestly colleges, was probably the first to attempt the production of a systematic conception of the family of gods and their relations to the universe. In their theory the beginning

of all things was a great primordial body of water called the Nun or Nu, wherein lay all the germs of life. From this primeval chaos, the sun-god, Ra-Atum-Khepera, was in some unknown way evolved. He then bethought himself to create other beings, and 'he begat of himself and spat it out.' The two beings thus brought into existence were Shu, the God of Space who supports the heavens, and his wife Tefnut. From Shu and Tefnut were produced Seb and Nut, the God of the Earth and the Goddess of the Sky; while from Seb and Nut came Osiris and Set, with their wives Isis and Nephthys, from whom are descended human beings. This group—the sun-god, Shu and Tefnut, Seb and Nut, Osiris and Isis, Set and Nephthys—forms the company of gods known as the Great Heliopolitan Ennead. The legends attaching to this group of cosmic gods will fall to be considered later.

With the rise of the Middle Kingdom under the princes of Thebes, the local god Amen (Plate VIII., 2, and Fig. 45), originally a deity of no great importance, began to rise into prominence, and as Thebes more and more asserted itself as the centre of the national life, the influence of the Heliopolitan priesthood declined. In place of the Heliopolitan Ennead was now exalted the Theban Triad of Amen-Ra, Mut, and Khonsu. Gradually Amen-Ra rose into the position of the State-god of Egypt, and the only other gods who could be considered beside him were the old gods Ra-Horus of Heliopolis and Ptah of Memphis. But even their influence and importance fell far short of the power of the Lord of Thebes. As he rose in popularity, other gods, such as Min of Koptos and Khnum of Elephantine, were identified with him, while such goddesses as Bast and Sekhmet were identified with his divine consort Mut.

Thus, by a process of absorption and identification, the national religion was gradually tending towards a point

from which the great step to monotheism might have been made; and it was precisely at this time, the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty, when the influence of the one god, Amen-Ra, had become absolutely supreme in Egypt, that Akhenaten carried the process to its logical conclusion, thrust aside all the old confusion of deities and the materialism which degraded the conception of deity, and endeavoured to impose upon the land a genuine and approximately spiritual monotheism. As we have seen, however, the time was not ripe for so radical a change as Akhenaten contemplated; and the effort, made prematurely, only resulted in a stern reaction. Amen-Ra regained all his old supremacy, and with him came back the other great gods. The idea of a single god became associated in the national mind with heresy and disaster, and Egyptian religion remained polytheistic in practice to the last.

During the time of the Nineteenth Dynasty one other god attained a remarkable popularity. This was Set, who from of old had been one of the members of the Great Heliopolitan Ennead, and who occupies an important, if unenviable, place in the story of Osiris. For some unknown reason the kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty regarded him as their ancestor, and one of them was named from him, Set-nekht—'Set is strong'—while two bore the name of Sety—'he who belongs to Set.' He became one of the chief gods, and in the new capital of Ramses II. at Tanis a magnificent temple was built to him. Set was identified with the Syrian Baal, and along with his popularity came that of numerous Syrian gods and goddesses. Later, however, when Syria for the second time became the scene of Egyptian disasters, Set fell off in popularity, as being the god of the enemies of Egypt. Finally he came to be regarded as the embodiment of evil; the position which he occupies in the Osiris myth as

the enemy of the beneficent Osiris was emphasized, and he was held to be the Satan of the Egyptian religion. He was expelled from the Pantheon, and his name and portraits were obliterated in every possible instance. But the expulsion of Set could not restore Amen to his pride of place. Thebes was now steadily declining in importance, and Amen's influence declined along with that of his city. In the last stage of the Egyptian history with which we have been dealing, Amen's place is taken successively by the gods of the different towns which became the capitals of the land—Bast of Bubastis in the Libyan Dynasty, Neit of Sais in the time of the Saite revival; while over all the other cults, the most ancient of them all, that of Osiris, asserts its supremacy more and more.

Before considering the Osirian legends, however, we must glance at the mythology connected with Ra and the cycle of cosmic gods. The Egyptian gods appear very much as mere names to us because we have very little knowledge of the mythology attaching to them. If we had not the beautiful stories of the Greek mythology, the gods of Hellas would seem as shadowy to us as their Egyptian compeers. Unfortunately, the mythology of ancient Egypt has almost entirely perished. There was such a mythology, and it was of considerable extent, as is shown by the continual references to it in the sacred texts. But its legends were so much matter of familiar knowledge that it was not considered necessary to multiply copies of them, and so the great majority of them has perished. A few of the legends have survived, however, and though they are of a very commonplace type, and very different from the beautiful myths which were the product of the Greek imagination, they are worth relating as showing the vesture of circumstance with which the Egyptian mind clothed its divinities, and the relations

which it conceived them as holding towards the creation, and especially towards men.

The first is merely a short creation-legend, giving an account of the separation of the heavens from the earth and the forming of the stars. Ra, as we have seen, was the first being who was evolved out of the primeval Nun, and from his children, Shu, the God of the Air, and Tefnut, his wife, there sprang Nut, the Goddess of Heaven, and Seb, the God of the Earth. But as yet Seb and Nut were not separated; they lay locked in close embrace, Nut above Seb. Shu, therefore, thrust himself between them, and raised Nut from the body of Seb, so that she was arched over him on her feet and finger-tips, Shu, the separator, supporting her. Thus was formed the great vault of heaven, supported, as the Egyptians believed, at the cardinal points. Along with Nut, Shu raised all the other gods who had been created, and they became the stars, sailing in their barks along the back of Nut. Ra himself shared in this new arrangement, and sailed along the body of Nut in his own bark.

Other legends accounted for the elevation of the heavens in a very different fashion. The most important of these are the two legends which narrate how the Sun-god, in his old age, was obliged to disclose to Isis his great name, in which lay the secret of his power, and how men rebelled against his authority—as the infirmities of age crept upon him. 'The age of the god stirred in his mouth,' we are told, 'and his spittle fell to the ground.' The goddess Isis, impatient of his authority, conceived a plan for gaining his power from him. She knew already all things in heaven and earth save one—the secret name of Ra, which he kept hidden because the knowledge of it conferred magical power. She therefore kneaded the spittle which Ra had allowed to fall with earth, and moulded a serpent—'a noble worm'—which she placed in

the path where the Sun-god was wont to walk abroad. The serpent stung the god, who was immediately consumed with fierce pain. 'All his limbs trembled, and the poison invaded his flesh as the Nile penetrates the country.' In his agony he called upon all the gods to help him. Among them came Isis, the author of the mischief, who inquired what ailed him. 'I was bitten,' he said, 'by a worm which I did not see. Fire it is not, water it is not, and yet I am colder than water, and I am hotter than fire.' Isis besought him to tell her his name, that she might be able to heal him. For a time Ra evaded her request, but at last pain forced him to yield. Isis got the secret for which she craved, and by her magic restored the god to health.

But even after his recovery he had lost something of his old authority. 'His Majesty was old: his bones were of silver, his flesh of gold, and his hair of pure lapis lazuli,' and men began to conspire against him. On learning of their thoughts, he called all the gods together, and sought their counsel. His Majesty said to Nun, 'Thou eldest of the gods, from whom I issued, and progenitor of the gods. Behold the men who issued out of my eye, and who have conceived words against me. Tell me what ye would do with regard to this. I willed not to destroy them until I had heard what ye would say thereto.' Nun advised him to remain seated upon his throne, and to turn his eye upon the blasphemers. But when Ra turned his eye upon the earth, men fled to the deserts, 'for their hearts feared on account of the things which they had spoken.' Therefore the gods counselled Ra to send forth his eye, the goddess Hathor, that she might smite those who had blasphemed him. Hathor descended, and made a great slaughter, and returned rejoicing, purposing to continue her work next day. 'By thy life,' she said, 'I have gained the mastery over men, and this is pleasant to my heart.'

But Ra had compassion upon the rebels, and took steps to stay the slaughter. Sending swift spirits to gather a special kind of fruit from Elephantine, he caused a great quantity of beer to be brewed from it, which had the appearance of human blood. This was poured out early in the morning over the fields where Hathor desired to slay men. 'In the morning the goddess went out, and found it flooded; her face was beautifully mirrored in it. She drank of it, and it pleased her; she returned home drunken, and did not recognize men.' But Ra was weary of them, and resolved to withdraw himself from them. 'By my life, my heart is weary of being among them.' Therefore he summoned Nut, who was in the shape of a cow, and, having placed himself upon her back, she bore him up into the heights, where she now represents the sky. But 'she trembled on account of the height,' and so Ra called Shu, the God of Air and Space, who placed himself under the cow and held her up; and now the stars shine upon her belly, and the sun sails across her body in his bark.

When the men who had not been slain came to give thanks to Ra, they found him no longer in his place, but on the back of the heavenly cow. To give him proof of their repentance, they pledged themselves that next morning they would shoot down all who were still rebellious; and so they did. 'Whereupon the majesty of this god said unto them, "Your sins are remitted unto you, for sacrifice precludes the execution of the guilty." And this was the origin upon earth of sacrifices in which blood was shed.' Crude and clumsy as are these legends, it is not difficult to see in them the germs of some of those theological ideas which have had the most widespread currency among men, and to recognize the essential kinship of the Egyptian religion to the other great faiths of the world.

The representations of these legends scarcely tally with

the picture which the Egyptian commonly drew to himself of the earth and its relation to the heavenly bodies; but to him such inconsistencies were matters of minor importance. In this picture the earth was represented by an oval surface, in the centre of which lay Egypt, traversed by the Nile. This surface was surrounded by lofty mountains, and four of these, rising at the cardinal points, formed the supporting pillars of the sky, which was represented as a flat metal plate from which the fixed stars were hung like lamps. Around the mountains which bordered the earth ran the great celestial river, and on this river there sailed from east through south to west the bark of the Sun-god, bearing the brilliant luminary. At the west he passed into the dark region of the underworld, the Duat, and journeying through it during the hours of night, emerged again at the east next morning. The Duat, or underworld, was supposed to be peopled by the dead, and the teaching with regard to it and its features received a great elaboration in the time of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

But the religious legends which had the most widespread and enduring popularity, and which exercised by far the greatest practical influence upon the lives of the Egyptians, were those concerning the god Osiris. Osiris, as we have seen, had his place, though not a foremost one, in the Great Heliopolitan Ennead. But he had also an independent place and mythology of his own, and around him the whole fabric of the Egyptian conception of the life after death gathered itself. The Osiris legend is probably one of the very oldest developments of Egyptian religious thought, and is certainly anterior in its main outlines to the solar legends which we have just been considering. Allusions to it are constant in the earliest religious writings, the Pyramid Texts.* Unfortunately, we only have it connectedly in a very late version; but there

* *See note on p. 363.*

is no reason to doubt that this version represents the facts with reasonable accuracy.

Osiris, then, was a god who became sovereign of Egypt, and ruled in a humane manner, teaching men the elements of civilization. Later he journeyed over the world, conquering men, not by force of arms, but by wisdom, and teaching them, as he had taught the native Egyptians. His brother Set, however, was jealous of him, and conspired against him during his absence. When he returned. Set, along with the other conspirators, adopted a stratagem to get rid of him. At a feast Set exhibited a beautiful chest which he had caused to be made, offering it to him whose body should fit it. After the others had tried, Osiris lay down in the chest, whereupon Set and his fellow-conspirators made haste to nail it up, poured molten lead over it, and threw it into the Nile. Isis, the wife of the god who had thus been slain, went everywhere seeking her dead husband, and at last found the chest at Byblos. Bringing it home still closed, she opened it in Egypt, and mourned over the dead body; but Set, coming upon the remains of his brother, tore them into fragments, which he scattered over the land. The indefatigable Isis went in search of the fragments, and wherever she found a member of the body, she buried it. Thus there are many sepulchres of Osiris in Egypt. An earlier version of this portion of the legend states that Ra sent down the fourth of his sons, Anubis, to wrap the body of Osiris in bandages like those of a mummy, while Isis with her wings caused breath to enter into it, and Osiris moved and lived again. Unable to return to his former life as an earthly king, he reigned in the spirit-world, and became the god of the dead (Plate XXIV. and Plate XXXII., 1).

Meanwhile an avenger of his own house was being prepared for him. While Isis mourned over his dead body, she conceived a son—Horus, the avenger of his

father. She brought him up in secret among the swamps of the Delta, and though many dangers threatened him from the malignity of Set, her care averted them all. Isis in this aspect became to the Egyptians the type of true and holy maternity, and is as frequently represented in religious pictures with her son Horus upon her knee as is the Madonna with the infant Christ in Christian art (Fig. 45). When Horus grew to maturity, he entered

FIG. 45.—ISIS NURSING HORUS, GUARDED BY AMEN AND THOTH.

into conflict with Set. In the battle both combatants were seriously wounded, Horus losing an eye, while Set was even more fearfully mutilated; but in the end Horus triumphed, and was welcomed by the assembled gods. The persistent Set brought an accusation of illegitimacy against his conqueror; but the case was tried by the gods, and the legitimacy of Horus was vindicated. He was established as his father's heir, and the crowns of both lands were placed upon his head. At this same assize,

which took place in the great hall of Heliopolis, Set also made some accusation against Osiris; but the assembled judges acquitted Osiris, pronouncing him 'true of voice,' and the god placed his foot upon his prostrate enemy. He then ascended into heaven, and reigns there as god of the spirits of the dead; or, in the other version, where the dead abide in the underworld, has his throne there.

Such is a brief outline of the Osiris legend; and we have now to see how it became connected with the belief in personal immortality. In the very earliest age the mythical history of Osiris was considered to be repeated in the experience of the Pharaoh. He, too, reigned over men; he was slain by death; his son, like Horus, arose to take his place upon his father's throne. From these resemblances there was but a step to anticipating for the dead Pharaoh in the other world the destiny experienced by his great prototype. The king was identified with Osiris, and was believed to be raised to life again in the person of the god, and placed upon the throne of the underworld. Gradually this belief in the possibility of identification with Osiris extended from the Pharaoh to the mass of his subjects, and it came to be held that not only the king, but any man, might, if the due rites and ceremonies had been performed, be awakened to new life after death, and become one with Osiris. The idea finally became universal, and every Egyptian believed that, because Osiris died and rose again, and lived in eternal blessedness, he himself might anticipate the same destiny if the requirements of religion had been duly satisfied.

But this consummation was not supposed to be attained merely by the performance of ceremonies and the recitation of magical formulæ, important as these might be. To suppose this would be to do injustice to the ethical sense of the Egyptian. It was here that the legend of the accusation and justification of Osiris was brought into

play as the basis of that conception of the judgment after death which is so remarkable a feature of Egyptian religious thought. Osiris, after his death and revival, had been tried before the gods and pronounced just; therefore the person who wished to share in the blessedness of Osiris had to undergo a similar ordeal. Entering the great hall of justice, the 'Hall of Maati,' the deceased had to appear before forty-two terrible beings, half human, half monstrous. Before these he had to make a statement in which he asserted to each dæmon that he had not been guilty of the particular sin which that dæmon had authority to punish. This statement is the famous 'Negative Confession,' in which the moral code of the Egyptians is practically embodied. The sins denied are such as these: 'I have slain neither man nor woman;' 'I have not made light the bushel;' 'I have not pried into matters to make mischief;' 'I have not multiplied my speech beyond what should be said;' 'I have not fouled running water;' 'I have not uttered curses against God.' After this confession has been made, the heart of the dead man is weighed in a balance against the feather which was the symbol of Maat, the Goddess of Truth. The god Anubis tests the tongue of the balance, while Thoth writes down the result of the weighing. Should the heart not prove satisfactory, it is thrown to the devourer of the unjustified, a composite monster, part crocodile, part hippopotamus, which sits awaiting its prey. Should confession and weighing prove satisfactory, the now justified person is pronounced, like Osiris, 'true of voice,' is led by Horus into the presence of the great God of the Dead, and enters upon a life of everlasting blessedness. This fully developed doctrine of the judgment after death is of somewhat later date, though the germ of it is found in texts of the Old Kingdom. In an earlier form of doctrine found in the Pyramid Texts, the devout

deceased is led up a ladder into heaven, whose gate opens to him, and he is welcomed by Ra, and set upon the throne of Osiris, enjoying all the powers of the god; while on earth his son takes his place, as Horus took the place of Osiris, carries on the work of his father, and makes provision for funeral offerings to him.

With regard to the dwelling-place and occupation of the blessed dead, there was an almost inextricable confusion of ideas. The Egyptians never attempted to reconcile these, or even to select one of them to the exclusion of the others, and in their religious texts they are jumbled up together in the most extraordinary medley. What is probably the earliest and certainly the simplest idea is that after death the deceased person leads another life of very much the same type as that which he lived on earth. His home is the tomb; the same joys and privileges which marked his earthly career are continued to him; especially he must eat and drink, and must be provided with the means of sustenance if he is not to be reduced to the abhorred necessity of sustaining existence upon filth. Therefore there arose the necessity of offerings for the dead. Originally these were actual offerings of food and drink, and were either furnished directly by the relatives of the dead man, or provided for by an endowment left for the purpose. Later these offerings were merely pictured on the tomb, while sepulchral inscriptions called upon the passer-by to recite the formula of prayer which ensured a sufficient supply of provisions for the dead: 'A thousand jugs of beer, a thousand loaves of bread, a thousand head of cattle, a thousand ducks, for the soul of ——'.

This very simple view of the after-life, which maintained itself more or less throughout all the periods of Egyptian history, was, however, felt to be not altogether satisfactory, and other views arose to supplement it. In one of these,

also of very early date, the dead man flies up to heaven like a bird, and becomes one of those happy souls who are seen at night shining as stars. In heaven he is received by Ra, and is assigned a place in the bark of the Sun-god, with whom he journeys across the sky. He even becomes one of the company of the gods, and in one version of the idea found in the Pyramid Texts he is represented, with the wildest flight of extravagant fancy, as lassoing and devouring the gods and the illuminated souls. 'The great ones among them are his morning meal, the middle ones are his evening meal, and the small ones his night meal. The old men and women among them come into his oven.' Stripped of such wild extravagances as this, the idea of the illuminated soul sharing the voyage of the Sun-god seems on the whole the most spiritual conception of the life after death to which the Egyptian mind attained.

In its later development, which was reached particularly in the Nineteenth Dynasty, this conception degenerated, and became a ground for the exhibition of the most degrading superstition, and of all the Egyptian belief in the power of magic arts. The Book of Amduat, or of 'him who is in the underworld,' describes the voyage of the sun through the twelve hours of darkness. This underworld is the abode of the dead, and through it the sun sails in his bark, accompanied by the dead man who has been instructed in all the magical formulæ required for the voyage. Each hour of the voyage has its own special characteristics and dangers, and each is guarded by a massive gate, the approach to which is further obstructed by fire-breathing serpents. The god, or his human companion, was required to know the names of all the various serpents, gates, and dæmons to be encountered, and the special magical formula suited to each. Such knowledge was held to be an infallible protection to the dead man.

'To him it is of the greatest use upon earth, and of use in the great underworld'; while the unfortunate who is ignorant of it cannot hope to escape from the great serpent Apap. It is the detail of this degenerate version of the voyage of the Sun-god which is pictured in such profusion upon the walls of the royal tombs in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties (Plate XVI., 2). But this conception of the underworld, and the books which dealt with it, the Book of Amduat and the Book of the Gates, never became really popular. It was more of an excrescence upon, than a true development of, the Egyptian religion.

Yet another conception of the life after death was that of the Elysian Fields, or, as the Egyptians called them, the Sekhet Aaru, or Field of Reeds. This kingdom of the blessed was originally supposed to lie somewhere in the Delta marshes; as knowledge widened, it was transferred to more distant Syria, and finally to the sky, where the streams of light forming the Milky Way, and the dark patches of sky which these encircle, may have led to the conception of islands of the blessed, surrounded by a celestial Nile. To these happy islands the souls of the blessed dead were borne. They passed the surrounding waters, some by the help of the hawk of Horus and the ibis of Thoth, some in the bark of the Sun-god, but most by the aid of the Egyptian Charon, the ferryman 'Turn-face' or 'Look-behind,' so called from his attitude as he poled his boat across the stream. Arrived there, they paddled on the streams in their papyrus skiffs, or they hunted and fished as on earth. The main occupation, however, was agriculture; but in this blessed abode the corn grew seven ells high, and the ear alone measured three. When the day's work was done, there was rest and a game of draughts under the shade of the sycamore-trees. This simple life, with its labours, ceased to appeal to the great men of the nation at a comparatively early stage.

They had never laboured on earth; why should they labour in heaven? The difficulty was probably got over at first by the actual slaying of the servants of the king or great noble at his tomb, that they might accompany the great man and toil for him in the spirit-world as they had done on earth. But the mercifully inclined Egyptian mind quickly passed away from this ruthless custom, and from the time of the Middle Kingdom there appear the curious and ingenious substitute-servants known as 'ushabtis,' or 'answerers.' These were figurines in the form of a mummy, bearing hoes and other implements of labour. It was their duty, when their master was called upon for work in the Sekhet Aaru, to rise up and take his place, that so he might spend eternity in the same dignified leisure which had marked his earthly career. The stock inscription upon these little figures declares their purpose. 'Oh, thou ushabti, when I am called, and when I am required to do any kind of work which is done in the underworld, . . . and am required at any time to cause the fields to flourish, to irrigate the banks, to convey the sand from the east to the west, thou shalt say, "Here am I."' This naïve precaution against the need of labour contained, however, a possibility of danger. The ushabti, if not properly instructed, might obey the call, not of the dead man, but of someone who had been his enemy in life, and was still his enemy in the life after death. 'An especially cautious man would therefore write on his ushabti, after the usual formula, these words: *Obey him only who made thee; do not obey his enemy.*'*

The funerary customs of the Egyptians varied very considerably, as was to be expected, during the long course of the national history. In the earliest times there was no attempt at mummification. The body was laid in a shallow trench on its left side with the knees drawn up

* Erman, 'Handbook,' p. 142.

and the hands frequently raised before the face, and was accompanied by objects of use or adornment—the slate palette for face-paint, jars and bowls for food and drink, a clay boat in which to cross the rivers of the other world, and so forth. Somewhat more elaborate was the form, also very early, in which the body was huddled up under a large inverted clay vessel. The tombs of the Pharaohs of the first dynasties were great chambers, sometimes lined with wood, sometimes with stone, and approached by staircases leading down from the ground-level. Along

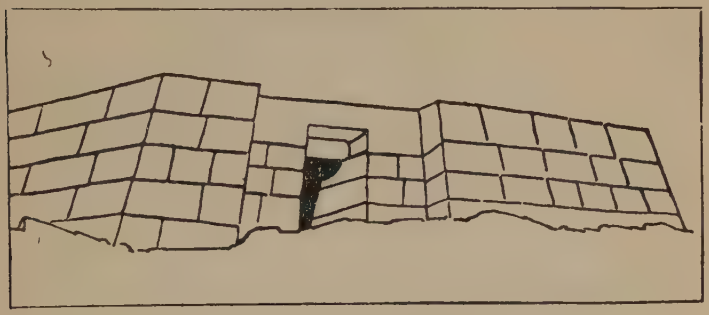


Fig. 46.—A Mastaba.

with the king was buried a mass of household utensils and furniture, while the graves of his servants and courtiers lay around his own tomb. Later, these comparatively humble structures were not deemed sufficient for the glory of the Pharaoh, and with Zeser we have the rise of the Pyramid form of tomb, which reached its greatest development in the Fourth Dynasty.

Around the royal pyramid there clustered in a perfect city of the dead the 'mastaba' tombs of the nobles. The word 'mastaba' means a bench, and is applied to these tombs by the fellahin from their resemblance to the bench which stands outside the door of a native house. The mastaba (Fig. 46) is a rectangular building whose

walls have a slight inward inclination and are crowned by a flat roof—the structure thus somewhat resembling a pyramid whose upper courses have been removed. The real tomb lies beneath this erection at the foot of a deep vertical shaft. This shaft is carried up through the stone-work of the mastaba, and on the day of burial the body was let down by it into the chamber at the foot, and the shaft was then filled up. On the east side of the mastaba there was a shallow niche, the 'false door,' by means of which the dead man was supposed to go out and in. Here offerings were made to the departed and prayers were recited on his behalf. This niche is frequently developed into a small chamber which bears the false door on its inner wall, and in some of the larger mastabas there were several such chambers whose walls were covered with pictures representing the life of the deceased. These chambers were open to the family; but in addition there was generally a smaller room, which was inaccessible. This is the 'serdab,' or cellar, in which was placed the portrait-statue of the dead man, sometimes accompanied by those of his wife and children. The serdab was walled off from the other chambers, but there was frequently an opening left in the partition, through which the deceased might hear the prayers of his family and smell the incense which they had provided.

With the Middle Kingdom, when the seat of government shifted from Memphis to the narrower valley further south, the mastaba was abandoned in favour of the tomb hewn out of the cliffs which border the river (Plate XXXI., 2). Here we have an open court in front, with a vestibule behind it cut out of the rock, and adorned with pillars. Behind the vestibule lies a pillared chamber for offerings and, finally, the small chamber containing the portrait-statue of the deceased. The rock-tomb was enormously developed by the great

1. PYLON OF TEMPLE, EDFU.
2. ROCK-TOMB, BENI HASAN.

kings of the Empire, whose graves are found in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes. A long gallery, gradually sloping downwards, was driven into the rock, and, passing through several chambers, terminated, sometimes several hundred feet from its mouth, in a chamber where the body of the king was laid in his huge stone sarcophagus. The walls of the gallery and chambers were covered with reliefs representing scenes of the underworld. In the case of these royal tombs, the funerary offerings were not made in the actual valley where the tomb lay. The

FIG. 47.—CANOPIC JARS.

Pharaoh had his great mortuary temple out on the plain, and the services in memory of 'the good god' were conducted there.

With the Pyramid period of the Old Kingdom, the old crouching method of burial was discarded. The body was laid in a natural position on its left side, often with a pillow under its head. It was preserved from decomposition by one or other of the various processes of embalmment in which the Egyptians were such adepts. The viscera were removed and were placed in four jars, known as the 'Canopic' jars. These were supposed to be under the pro-

tection of four genii, the 'children of Horus,' Amset, Hapi, Tuamautef, and Qebhsennuf, and they generally bear as lids the heads of the genii, a man, a hawk, an ape, and a jackal (Fig. 47). In some instances, as in the case of Akhenaten, portraits of the deceased person are substituted for the heads of the four children of Horus. In the New Kingdom these genii are responsible for the doing away with a great proportion of the offerings of food and drink which formerly used to be made at the tomb. It was believed that the magical power of the children of Horus would provide against hunger and thirst, and the offerings largely cease.

But not even the four genii were held to be sufficient protection for the dead man. It was believed that in the underworld he would have innumerable dangers to encounter, rivers to cross, serpents to fight against, and all kinds of evil creatures to evade. It was therefore necessary to provide him with defences against these, and also with means which would secure that he should not be turned back at the gate of the kingdom of the blessed, and that his heart should not be found deficient in the judgment. To provide against these last two contingencies he was furnished with amulets. The danger of his heart proving an inconvenient witness was averted by laying on his breast a large stone scarabæus beetle, inscribed as follows: 'O heart that I have from my mother! O heart that belongs to my spirit, do not appear against me as witness . . . do not contradict me before him who governs the balance . . . do not suffer our name to stink . . . tell no lie against me before the god.' The danger of being turned back from the gates of the underworld was provided against by two amulets—a golden model of the sacred pillar of Osiris, and a buckle of red jasper, the emblem of Isis. For all the other dangers which the dead man had to encounter in the spirit-land special

amulets were needed, until at last the body was sometimes covered with them as with a suit of armour.

Even the amulets were at length held to be no longer a sufficient protection. It was necessary that the deceased should know words of power which would enable him to triumph over all dangers, and enjoy such privileges as that of changing his shape into that of a phœnix, a crocodile, or a lotus-flower; of uniting his soul again to his body; and of going in and out of the door of his tomb to enjoy the sunlight and the fresh air. A whole literature gradually grew up which was based upon nothing but the express purpose of enabling the dead man to accomplish all these and other similar ends. The chief representative of this literature is the well-known Book of the Dead, often called, but quite misleadingly, the Egyptian Bible. Far from being an adequate representation of Egyptian religious ideas, the Book of the Dead only represents one single aspect of them, and that only in a comparatively late form. It is really 'an incongruous accumulation of charms and formulæ, parts of which were taken at discretion by various scribes according to local or individual tastes.' The bulk of the volume makes somewhat melancholy reading with its endless recital of fantastic charms against fantastic dangers. A few of the briefest of these spells may suffice as examples of the extraordinary rubbish which disfigures its pages. One version of the chapter 'Of Repulsing Serpents' runs as follows: 'Hail thou serpent Rerek, advance not hither. Behold Seb and Shu. Stand still now, thou who hast eaten the rat which is abominable unto Ra, and hast crunched the bones of a putrid cat.' Scarcely so idiotic is the chapter 'Of not letting the Head of a Man be Cut off from Him in the Underworld.' 'I am the Great One, son of the Great One; I am Fire, the son of Fire, to whom was given his head after it had been cut off. The

head of Osiris was not taken away from him; let not the head of Osiris N. or M. be taken away from him. I have knit myself together; I have made myself whole and complete; I have renewed my youth; I am Osiris, the lord of eternity.' The spell against having to eat filth in the underworld, a danger especially dreaded, runs as follows: 'That which is an abomination unto me, that which is an abomination unto me, let me not eat. That which is an abomination unto me, that which is an abomination unto me, is filth; let me not be compelled to eat it in the absence of the sepulchral cakes and provisions which shall be offered unto me. Let me not be destroyed thereby; let me not be compelled to take it into my hands; and let me not be compelled to walk thereon in my sandals.'* Were we obliged to judge the Egyptian religion from such stuff as this, our estimate of it would probably be a singularly low one. But, mingled with this debased superstition, we find the noble code of morality of the Negative Confession, and the conception of the Judgment after Death.

The Book of the Dead was never used as a book of religion in our sense of the word. It was written for the dead, and meant only to be used by them. Passages selected from the book were inscribed upon coffins in the period of the Middle Kingdom; thereafter, while they are still found upon the coffins, the book is also written upon papyrus in various versions of greater or less fulness, and buried along with the deceased. Apparently copies were made in great numbers by the scribes, and kept in stock with blank spaces ready to be filled in with the name of the person with whom the papyrus was to be buried; and as these documents were never meant to be seen again after they had once been committed with their owners to the tomb, the writing is frequently very careless, and full

* Budge, 'The Book of the Dead,' p. 103.

of the most extraordinary blunders. In later times the place of the complete book is frequently taken by a sort of epitome of it called the Book of Breathings, while in the Ramesside period, as already noted, there was a preference for another book, called the Book of Amduat. This again had another variant known as the Book of Gates. The two latter books are mainly known to us from the royal tombs on which they are inscribed.

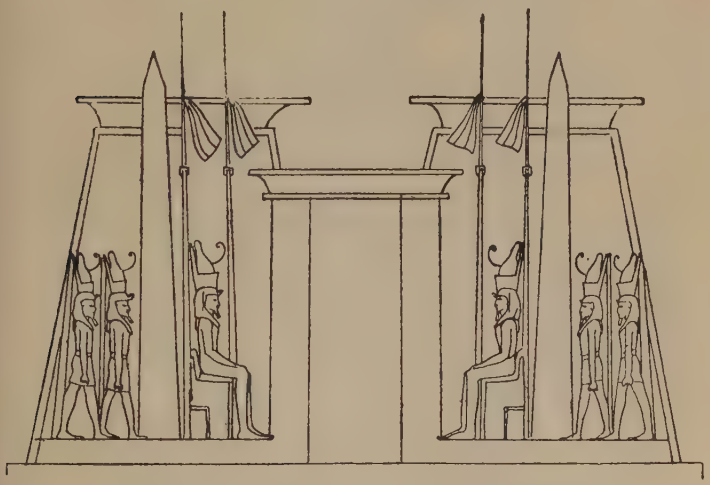


FIG. 48.—PYLON OF AN EGYPTIAN TEMPLE.

Of the sacred buildings in which the religious rites of the Egyptians were performed, we have fortunately ample relics, the architectural remains of the land consisting almost entirely of tombs and temples. There are, of course, many minor variations in the details of the various temple structures; but, roughly speaking, they conform to a single, and fairly simple, type. The temple was approached generally by a paved road, which was bordered on either side by a row of sphinxes, and which led up to the crude brick wall surrounding the *Temenos*, or sacred

enclosure. This boundary-wall was pierced by a gateway which bore above its lintel the winged globe symbolical of the sun. Passing through this gateway, there appeared the great pylon of the temple, a huge portal flanked by two towers (Plate XXXI., 1). In front of each of these towers rose a couple of lofty flagstaves, tipped with gaily coloured pennons, while the approach was frequently further adorned by a pair of obelisks and several colossal statues of the Pharaoh to whom the erection of the temple was due (Fig. 48). Within the pylon lay a wide court, open to the sky, and surrounded by a colonnade—the peristyle court, which was opened to the public on days of ceremony. Behind this court there lay a hall whose flat roof was supported by rows of columns, the two central rows being generally higher than the side-rows, and thus dividing the hall into a lofty nave and two lower side-aisles. Behind this hall, again, lay the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, where the statue of the god had its abode. It was flanked on either side by chambers devoted to the use of the other members of the sacred triad—the wife and the son of the god. Around these halls, which constituted the actual temple, were grouped various chambers for the storage of the sacred vessels and for other purposes connected with the cult. Two points are to be noted with regard to the successive halls in each temple. They gradually diminish in height from the pylon to the Holy of Holies, which is the lowest part of the temple proper; and the same progressive diminution takes place with regard to their lighting. The open court is in the full blaze of sunlight; the hypostyle hall has only the dim religious light which struggles through the gratings in the clerestory of the nave, or through small apertures in the roof; the Holy of Holies is in profound darkness.

The larger temples, such as the vast structures of

Karnak and Luqsor, cannot be made to conform to this simple type, for the reason that they are not so much single temples as aggregates of temples. Each great monarch wished to leave behind him some memorial of his reign in the shape of an addition to these famous structures; and so pylon rises behind pylon, and court behind court, and the original simplicity of the design is entirely lost sight of.

The decoration of these temples was magnificent. Impressive as the massive ruins are at the present day, they can convey but little idea of the splendour of the original building. We read of doors made of cedar and bronze, the woodwork overlaid with gold; of steles incrusted with gold and precious stones and inlaid with lapis lazuli and malachite, and of floors overlaid with silver; while the reliefs which still adorn the walls were brilliantly coloured, and the inscriptions inlaid with coloured pastes. A great Theban temple in its primal magnificence, with all the richness of its colouring still undimmed, and its adornments of polished granite, lapis, and malachite reflecting the brilliant rays of the Egyptian sun, must have been one of the most gorgeous structures ever reared by the hand of man. The reliefs with which the walls were covered were of two classes. On the outer face of the wall were represented the great deeds of the Pharaoh who built the temple; within, the scenes related to worship, and pictured the various sacred ceremonies which were daily performed.

Differing widely from the type described above were the sun-temples of the Fifth Dynasty, whose remains have been recently explored. They were simply huge open courts, at whose further end there rose a great obelisk, resting upon a base in the form of a truncated pyramid. A large altar stood in front of the obelisk, and the only other chambers of the temple were the auxiliary structures

necessary for storage of the sacred vessels and other details of the worship.

The image of the god which occupied the sanctuary in the rear of a normal temple was scarcely worthy of all the magnificence which surrounded it. It was generally small, in most cases not exceeding 16 or 18 inches in height, and was often of wood, painted, and with inlaid eyes. The smallness of the image arose from the fact that it had frequently to be carried about. Normally the little statue reposed in its chapel, which was frequently hewn out of a single block of granite, sometimes, especially in the latest historical periods, of enormous size (Plate XXXII., 2). This shrine was closed with bronze doors. On festival days, however, the image was taken out of its chapel and placed in a portable shrine of wood and bronze. The shrine was then surrounded by a veil, and was set on a sacred bark, which was borne on the shoulders of the priests by means of carrying-poles (Plate XXX., 1). At certain stations in the forecourt of the temple or in the town the shrine was deposited on a pedestal, and, when incense had been burnt and offerings and prayers made, the veil was drawn, and the sacred image was disclosed to the eyes of the faithful.

On ordinary days the ritual was performed within the Holy of Holies. The officiating priest went through a certain invariable course of ceremonies, each action of which was accompanied by the recitation of an appropriate form of words. The number of rites varied according to the god and the temple in question. The priest of Amen at Thebes had no fewer than sixty to perform; at Abydos, the priest of Osiris had only thirty-six. But the essential part of the ritual was pretty much as follows: 'After the priest had offered incense and had filled the Holy of Holies with the perfume, he approached the chapel and opened it. He saluted the god with repeated prostrations, and

1. RELIEF OF RAMSES II., ABYDOS.

2. MONOLITH SHRINE, EDFU.

with chanting or repetition of hymns. He then took his vessels, which were close at hand in a box, and began the daily toilet of the god. Twice he sprinkled water over the statue from four jugs; he clothed it with linen bandages, which were white, green, red, and reddish in colour; he anointed it with oil, painted it with green and black paints, and completed its toilet in other respects. Finally he fed the god, by setting before him a variety of food and drink—bread, geese, haunch of beef, wine and water. Flowers, also, could no more be omitted from an Egyptian table of offerings than they could be from the dining-table of a noble.'*

The priesthood was divided into various grades, whose titles were different in the different temples. The priesthood of Amen in the time of Ramses II. had five grades. The Munich statue of the priest Bakenkhonsu mentions these grades, and shows how a man might rise through them. At the age of sixteen, Bakenkhonsu was made '*U'eb*' priest of Amen, which was the lowest grade; the word signifies 'pure.' Having served for four years in this grade, he was promoted to the next rank, that of 'Divine Father,' a post which he filled for twelve years. He then rose to be third prophet of Amen, and had fifteen years' service in that grade, when he was promoted to be second prophet, and after twelve years' further service, reached the rank of first prophet. At the time his statue was carved he had been first prophet for twenty-seven years, and was therefore eighty-six years old. Another statue of the same worthy priest, found by the Misses Benson and Gourlay in the temple of Mut, shows that he lived to see the reign of Ramses III., by which time he must have been at least a hundred years old. On his Munich statue Bakenkhonsu prays that he might attain

* Erman, 'Handbook,' p. 46.

'a happy existence of 110 years,' and it would seem that the prayer was answered.

In spite, however, of the existence of a numerous and richly endowed priesthood, the fiction was always kept up that it was the king alone who was priest. Indeed, the inscriptions in the temples recognize no relationship whatever as existing between the divine being and the rank and file of the nation. 'For the official religion as it was accepted in the temples,' says Erman, 'there existed only the god and the king. . . . The gods are no longer the gods of the Egyptian people, they are the gods of Pharaoh *their son*.' Accordingly, in the temple scenes it is always the king who is represented as officiating priest. As a matter of fact, it was only on exceptional occasions that the king took up the priestly functions, and when there was some special reason for his action. Thus, when Piankhi the Ethiopian conquered the rebellious princes of Lower Egypt, he assumed, as already noticed, the priestly function at Heliopolis, obviously for political reasons.

But it is entirely probable that all the official religion, and all the theologizing which divided up the gods into triads, enneads, and ogdoads, had comparatively little influence upon the common people. There was one exception: the cult of Osiris, as referring to the life after death, was always popular. Every Egyptian desired to become like unto Osiris in the after-life; and the devotion of all classes to the great god of the underworld manifested itself in a very curious way. It was believed that in the distribution of the scattered members of Osiris his head had been buried at Abydos, which thus came to be looked upon as peculiarly sacred to him. It was therefore considered a particularly desirable thing to be buried at Abydos, as near as possible to the grave of the deity. Those who were buried there were 'the great ones of Abydos,' and were sure of a welcome in the bark of the

sun; and so even those who found it impossible to have their actual graves there endeavoured at least to undertake a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre, and to leave there a memorial slab or *ex-voto* jug or vessel of some sort, in order that their names might be somehow connected with the resting-place of the king of the dead. To such an extent was the practice carried, especially between the Nineteenth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties, that the ancient cemetery at Abydos is a perfect wilderness of pottery, and goes by the Arab title of 'Umm-el-Ga'ab,' or 'Mother of Pots'! In some cases a man who had never been able to make the pilgrimage during his life made it after death, his mummy being carried to Abydos, and then brought back again to occupy its real tomb in his native place. The popularity of the Osiris myth is also shown by the fact that at Abydos it was made the subject of a kind of Miracle or Mystery Play, in which the life, death, and resurrection of the god were dramatically represented by the priests and the people; while at Memphis another play was enacted on the occasion of the setting up of the sacred pillar with multiple capital which represented the backbone of Osiris.

But, generally speaking, it would seem that the great gods were too great and too distant for the common people to feel much interest in them. The natural craving for a god of some sort in whom they could confide led them to make for themselves divinities who were more approachable. Thus, the curious bandy-legged god Bes (Fig. 49), and the hippopotamus-shaped goddess Taurt, who in the priestly religion were only inferior assistants to the great gods, became under the New Empire the favourite divinities of the middle classes, who named their children after them, and placed figures of these quaint deities in their houses. Others descended even lower in their search for approachable gods. One Theban commends his friend

to the protection of 'the great gates of Beki, the eight baboons which are in the forecourt,' and to two trees. Patron saints were also found in the persons of wise men of old, such as Imhotep, the architect and factotum of Zeser, and Amenhotep, son of Hapu, who filled a similar position in the time of Amenhotep III. The king Amenhotep I. and his mother Nefertari were, for some

FIG. 49.—BES.

unknown reason, special favourites and objects of adoration to the rank and file. One man recounts gratefully how Amenhotep had saved him from death when he had thrust his hand into a hole in which lay a great serpent. 'Thus it is seen,' he writes, 'how powerful is Amenhotep.' So the generality of the people allowed the official religion to go on its own obscure way, and adjusted its own beliefs to its immediate necessities.

Such, in brief and imperfect outline, is a sketch of the most important points of what has been handed down to us as the religion of Ancient Egypt. The general impression which can scarcely fail to be left is one of amazement at the confusion in which so acute a nation was content to leave its religious ideas, and at the curious externality and materialism of the whole. Yet the apparent confusion may, to some extent at least, be due to the imperfect state of our information; and there are not wanting evidences that even through all the husk of externality and materialism some souls found it possible to penetrate to an understanding of the fact that 'God looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart,' and that better than many words of devotion are faith and obedience. 'Pray to God,' says Ani, even in that compendium of platitudes which goes by his name, 'with a longing heart, in which all thy words are hidden; so will he grant thy request, and hear that which thou sayest, and accept thy offering.' And it was surely no materialist who addressed his god, even though that god were the ibis-headed Thoth, in terms such as these: 'Thou sweet spring for the thirsty in the desert; it is closed for those who speak there, it is open for those who keep silence there. When the silent man cometh, he findeth the spring.'

*Note to p.* 340.—The importance of the Pyramid Texts has come to be more and more recognized within the last few years. Professor Breasted's 'Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt' gives perhaps the best account of them available for English readers. They, and not the versions of the Book of the Dead, deserve to be regarded as the most important documents for the study of Egyptian religion.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A SUMMARY OF RECENT DISCOVERY AND OPINION

THE record of public interest in the story of ancient Egypt is one of alternate hot and cold fits. Periodically, when some remarkable discovery has drawn the eyes of the general public to the Land of the Nile, one or other of the Pharaohs becomes a nine days' wonder, and the average man assimilates a large quantity of variegated and generally inaccurate information about Egypt and things Egyptian; then some new wonder intervenes, and Egypt is forgotten and left once more to those incomprehensible beings, the archæologists. Such an outburst of interest was witnessed very conspicuously in 1881, when the *cache* of Pharaohs at Deir-el-Bahri was revealed to Emil Brugsch, acting for the Egyptian Service of Antiquities, after it had been for long the private treasure-house of the Abd-er-Rasul family, and people began to realize the wonder of a land where it was possible to look upon the faces of the very men who might conceivably have been the contemporaries, and perhaps the opponents, of Moses and Aaron in their struggle for the freedom of the Hebrew race. Some readers will be able to remember the tide of magazine articles, and pulpit and newspaper references which flowed over the civilized world in the early eighties, and the speedy ebb which followed. But though the public soon forgot the very name of Ramses II., to say nothing of Sety I., the solid result of the hot fit was

the establishment in our country of the Egypt Exploration Fund, which has done such great work ever since, while other countries were not slow to follow in the same track.

Strange to say, the 1898 discovery of an equally interesting set of ancient royalties in the tomb of Amenhotep II., in the Valley of the Kings, excited comparatively little general interest, even though one of the mummies found was that of Merenptah, who had for a good many years been held to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Possibly Petrie's discovery, the year before, of Merenptah's 'Triumph' Stele had begun to create doubts as to the king's identity with the antagonist of Moses. At all events, nothing like the interest of the Deir-el-Bahri find was created by the later discovery, though it was unique in the fact that Amenhotep II. was found lying in his sarcophagus in his own rock-hewn tomb—the only Pharaoh who, up to that date, had been so discovered.

All previous sensations were surpassed, however, by the Egyptological boom—there is no other word to describe it—which was set in motion by Mr. Howard Carter's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen on November 4, 1922. For months Egyptology became almost popular, the 'rugged names' of ancient Pharaohs grew sleek to modern European tongues, in many strange transmogrifications, and the poor boy-king Tutankhamen himself achieved a posthumous fame infinitely transcending anything which he had known during his brief and troubled lifetime. One might have imagined, to judge from some of the writing on the subject, that Egyptian history had never been rightly understood before, and that all our estimates of the relative importance of various periods and reigns stood in need of the most drastic and thoroughgoing revision. Gradually, however, the dust of the momentary sensation has cleared away, and if, along with it, there has also vanished a great deal of the public

interest in ancient Egypt, at least we can see more clearly to what extent, if at all, our ideas must be modified to square with the facts revealed by the discovery.

On the whole, as we shall see later, the adjustment required is singularly small. So far as our general conception of the course of Egyptian history during the Eighteenth Dynasty is concerned, the revelations of the tomb of Tutankhamen make practically no difference at all. Their value for the study of the cultural development of Egypt at one of the great critical periods of ancient history is considerably greater, though even in this respect it does not appear that any very drastic revision of previous views will be necessary. The chief impressions which are to be derived are those of the amazing richness of Egypt even in a period which we must regard as one of declining strength and loss of prestige, and of the wonderful persistence of a great artistic tradition, even in a time when the spring and freshness of the period's art had passed, and the decadence had begun to set in.

But if this is true of the most sensational discovery of recent years, it is not less true of the other work which has been steadily going on since the resumption of excavation after the interruption caused by the Great War. A considerable amount of new information has been gathered, especially with regard to the Old Kingdom and the Eighteenth Dynasty; there has been a most thoroughgoing sifting of the views and theories formerly held with regard to certain periods, and particularly with regard to that period which has come to be known as the Amarna Age; but it can scarcely be said that anything has emerged, either from the excavations or from the discussions, which necessarily involves any considerable alteration in our general conceptions of the course of Egyptian history, or any very radical modification of our views as to the influences which determined its trend at any particular

point. Instead, therefore, of endeavouring to embody in the text of the previous chapters, at the expense of their continuity, certain modifications, which, after all, are not of any vital importance to the general truth and perspective of the story, it seems better to deal here with such points as seem to call for notice, and to trace in outline the chief additions which have been made to our knowledge of ancient Egypt since the publication of the last edition of this book.

On the question of the earliest kings of the Old Kingdom and their order there has been a great deal of discussion; but it cannot be said that the results have been in proportion to the liveliness of the conflict. Certainty is far from being reached as yet, even on such a point as to the identity of Mena, the cardinal figure of early Egyptian history. Opinion has gradually shifted away from the position in which Mena was regarded simply as a legendary figure, and his reality as an historical personage is generally admitted. 'Menes,' says Dr. H. R. Hall,* 'who, though a legendary figure, was no imaginary creation, since he was a real king, but in legend has attracted to himself the deeds of others who preceded and followed him.' But opinion is just about as sharply divided as ever on the point of the actual personality of this real king. On the whole, the general tendency seems to be in the direction of admitting that there may have been two kings bearing the name of Mena, and that the first of these is to be identified with Narmer, whose great slate palette (see Fig. 1, p. 15) is one of the most famous documents of this early period. Narmer-Mena would then take rank as the first king of the First Dynasty, his predecessor, 'The Scorpion,' having been the first of the three great conquerors who brought the land of Egypt under a single sway. Narmer-Mena, succeeding to the incomplete work of the Scorpion, carried

* 'Cambridge Ancient History,' vol. i., p. 261.

it a stage further; and the complete unification of the land was finally accomplished by his successor, Aha-Mena, who may be regarded as Mena II.; while the deeds of all three kings were grouped, in later days, round one great figure, made up of a little of each of them, who came to be the Mena of Egypt's traditional history. This is the reconstruction of this early stage of the history accepted by such authorities as Petrie in the tenth edition of his 'History of Egypt,' vol. i., and by Hall in the 'Cambridge Ancient History,' vol. i. It is not accepted, however, by Mr. Weigall, the latest historian of Egypt, who still keeps Narmer and the Scorpion as the two last kings of the dynasty preceding the first, and regards Aha-Mena as the genuine Mena of tradition, the first king of the First Dynasty. Mr. Weigall's reconstruction of the early annals of Egypt, based largely on a new interpretation of the data given by the fragments of the Palermo Stone, differs in a number of points from that generally accepted, and is claimed by him as the only possible and accurate version of Egyptian history—a claim which other authorities do not seem inclined to endorse. Even the faint savour of romance which lingered about Petrie's reading of the name which he took to be that of Mena's daughter (see p. 16) is somewhat unkindly dispelled by Mr. Weigall, who assures us that the signs in question signify nothing more romantic than 'date-wine,' and refer only to a mortuary offering on behalf of the King's spirit; but as Petrie states that the inscription occurs on ten ivory toilet objects one may perhaps still be allowed to believe in the 'sweetheart' version rather than in its prosaic successor.

More important than this small matter is the revival of the suggestion that the 'Manium of Magan,' whom Naram-Sin of Babylonia claims to have vanquished is none other then Mena. On sentimental grounds, if for no other reason, one would be loth to believe that the revered

founder of the Egyptian Kingdom underwent such a humiliation. Manetho tells us that Mena, after a reign of sixty-two years, perished of a wound received from a hippopotamus, and Dr. Albright, who has been mainly responsible for the revival of this old scandal, does not shrink from suggesting that Manetho's story may be 'the garbled reminiscence of his death in battle with a foreign army,' which must surely be about the record for an effort of the 'historic imagination.' Some might be inclined to say, 'better a hippopotamus than a Babylonian Semite.' In any case, there seems to be little need to worry over the matter. Mena can scarcely be brought down much further than 3500 B.C., which is the date at which the 'Cambridge Ancient History' places him, while Naram-Sin (unless we accept the dates of the much-abused Nabonidus) can scarcely be put much earlier than 2800 B.C. A chasm of 700 years seems sufficient to safeguard Mena's reputation.

Interesting, though not of vital importance, is Mr. Weigall's suggestion that Amélineau, after all, was perfectly right in believing that he had found the actual tomb of Osiris at Abydos. He holds that Amélineau's reading of the king's name as 'Khenti' is correct as against the generally accepted reading 'Zer,' that Khenti was the beneficent king whom the Egyptians afterwards came to reverence as the God Osiris, and that the whole story of the slaying of Osiris and the strife between Set the slayer, and Horus, the son of Osiris, is strictly historical. Egyptologists have been practically unanimous in believing that the Egyptians of the later period (Twentieth Dynasty or later) reading the royal name mistakenly as 'Khenti,' assumed the identity of the dead king with the old god Khenti-Amenti, 'The First of the Westerners,' who was identified in the later Egyptian belief with Osiris; that under this mistaken idea they imported into the ancient

tomb the grey granite 'bed of Osiris' which M. Amélineau found there in 1898; and that they continued the custom of piling the tomb with funerary offerings of pottery. Mr. Weigall believes that there was no mistake, and that the later Egyptians knew quite well what they were doing when they honoured the tomb of the old king of the First Dynasty as that of their great God of the Resurrection. It would surely be the greatest of all romances if it could be demonstrated that the actual tomb of the god in whom millions of Egyptians trusted as their pledge of immortality had been discovered; but Mr. Weigall stands alone to-day in his belief, as M. Amélineau stood alone twenty-eight years ago, to say nothing of the confusion which his theory would bring into the whole story of the development of Egyptian religion in its Osirian aspect.

A considerable amount of new material illustrative of Egyptian art and craftsmanship during the age of the Pyramid-builders has been accumulated by the Reisner excavations, but it cannot be said that anything has come to light which in any way alters the outline of the history of the Old Kingdom, as it has been drawn during this generation. Neither has the work of the Service of Antiquities in the clearing and repairing of the Great Sphinx done anything to increase our knowledge from an historical point of view. The Sphinx is now completely cleared of the sand which has had to be cleared away from it at more or less frequent intervals from the time of Thothmes IV. downwards, and it has been put into a condition of greater security and solidity. Both these facts are things to be thankful for, though the clearance and security have perhaps been gained by the sacrifice of something of the artistic effect of the great statue; but we know no more of its origin or of how it was maintained throughout the ages than we did before M. Baraize began his work.

Perhaps the most imposing monument of the Old Kingdom, apart from the Gizeh group of Pyramids, is the great unfinished tomb at Zawiyet-el-Aryan, between Gizeh and Abusir. The tomb was destined for the Pharaoh Neb-ka-Ra, who is the second king of the Third Dynasty in Petrie's arrangement, and the fourth in that of Weigall. In the former case he is the immediate predecessor of the famous Zeser of the Stepped Pyramid; in the latter, he is his successor at one remove. In either case, his reign falls within a few years of that of the great builder-king, and to many minds his unfinished monument will seem even more impressive than the Stepped Pyramid. It is not certain whether the work was destined to be completed as a pyramid or as a gigantic 'mastaba'; but this sketch of a royal tomb is one of the most amazing revelations conceivable of the wonderful organization and skill to which the Egyptians had attained at a time which cannot be later than 4000 B.C. All that is left is a gigantic T-shaped hollow, consisting of an oblong chamber, 82 feet by 46, with a stairway, 360 feet long by 28 feet wide, leading down to the floor of the chamber, which lies at a depth of 73 feet. This floor is composed of blocks of granite of an average weight of nine tons, while the central block weighs forty-five tons. Sunk into this Titanic pavement is an oval sarcophagus, which had a polished granite lid cemented on to it. The work of transportation involved in bringing all this material from far-off Aswan must have been enormous; while the organization of labour which could accomplish such a feat is perhaps even more astonishing than the quality of the work itself. 'The whole,' says the late Sir Gaston Maspero, 'is merely a T-shaped ditch, some 100 feet deep; and yet the impression it makes when one goes down into it is unforgettable. The richness and the cutting of the materials, the perfection of the joints and sections, the imcomparable finish of the basin, the

boldness of the lines and the height of the walls all combine to make up a unique creation.'

A similar impression is made by the extraordinary massiveness and splendour of the great underground chamber of the Osireion at Abydos, which bears obvious resemblance to the so-called Temple of the Sphinx at Gizeh, as regards the style and quality of its work, and must be presumed to belong to the same period, or perhaps to an even earlier date.

With the collapse of the Old Kingdom at the close of the Sixth Dynasty, we enter upon what is known as the First Intermediate Dark Period, from which we do not emerge until the Antefs and Mentuhoteps of the Eleventh Dynasty become visible, preparing the way for the greater stability and glory of the Amenemhats and Senuserts of the Twelfth. Of this dark interval we know little more than we did formerly, so far as regards the history of the period. On the other hand, certain important changes can be seen to have taken place gradually during this time, so that, though it may be blank for history, it is far from being blank with regard to the constitutional, social, and religious development of the nation. The constitutional change may be summed up in a single sentence. Egypt, at the beginning of the Dark Period, was a land ruled by a despotic monarch; the New Egypt of the Middle Kingdom is a feudal state. The social corollary of this change is manifest, and as important as its constitutional cause. Instead of the centralization of nearly all the wealth and influence of the land in the one favoured spot where the despotic monarch holds his court, the new Egypt has a resident aristocracy, the great feudal lords making it their practice to live each in the nome over which he was nomarch, and maintaining there a small provincial copy of the court of the Pharaoh. Thus, while it is quite possible that decentralization lowered the level

of the highest peak of culture attained—a level reached only in one spot and by a favoured few—it is more than probable that the average level of comfort and culture may have gradually risen in consequence of the more general distribution of knowledge and wealth.

From the religious point of view, a similar change can be traced. The outstanding doctrine of Egyptian religion, in all ages, is the doctrine of personal survival after death. In the Old Kingdom personal survival is a thing reserved, first for the Pharaoh alone, then gradually for the Pharaoh and his great lords. This essentially aristocratic view of immortality is typified by the 'Ka' statues of the period; for such costly insurances against annihilation were for the great and wealthy. Even towards the close of the Old Kingdom, however, there were signs of a broadening of view as to the possibility of personal survival for the commoner as well as for the king and his nobles, and little groups of model servants were beginning to take the place of the costly statues of earlier days, so that even a man of moderate means might find it possible to face the Underworld not quite unprepared for its exigencies. Gradually this tendency develops, until the practice is so general that the Middle Kingdom groups of funerary models are one of the best sources of information as to the life of the Egyptian of 2000 B.C. or thereabouts. The further development of this idea is, of course, found in the 'ushabtis,' which, towards the end of the Middle Kingdom, begin to take the place of the models, and become so universally popular in the Eighteenth and later Dynasties.

This democratization of religion is not less manifest in the form and decoration of the coffins. Here, towards the close of the Old Kingdom, we begin to see signs of the same broadening of view which we have been tracing in the funerary furniture. The earliest religious literature

—the Pyramid Texts—was for the Pharaoh alone; but as the age draws towards its close, the magical texts which secured the dead man against the dangers and needs of the underworld begin to be illuminated inside the coffin, in company with pictures of the foods and adornments which would be necessary to him in his journey. This tendency grows as the other does, and the Middle Kingdom 'Coffin Texts' confer all the advantages which formerly belonged to Pharaoh alone on every man who could afford to pay for an inscribed coffin. Finally, under the Empire, the process reaches its completion in the production of the papyrus rolls of different sizes and degrees of completeness, until at last even the humblest mummy carries, fastened to the bosom of his wrappings by a dab of bitumen, the little scrap of papyrus inscribed with the bare essentials which would enable him to face the dangers of the underworld unafraid.

When the kingdom at last begins to emerge from the darkness into the comparative light and stability of the Eleventh Dynasty, it is manifest that, in addition to the changes just discussed, there has been a distinct retrogression in some particulars of the national culture. The sculptor's art, for instance, has suffered, as was to be expected, during this time of strife and confusion, and in place of the delicate and spirited relief work of the Old Kingdom, we have, under the earlier kings of the Eleventh Dynasty, work which is marked by extraordinary crudity and stiffness. Gradually, with increasing stability of government, this passes away, and the later sculpture of the Middle Kingdom, while of quite a different type from that of the Old Kingdom, is marked by great power, and often by wonderful charm. The reliefs from the shrines of the priestesses in the pyramid-temple of Mentuhotep Neb-hapet-ra at Deir-el-Bahri, while they are still somewhat stiff and angular, are yet very charming pieces of

work, with all the promise of greater things to come. One fortunate survival in the shape of the funerary inscription of Mertisen, the chief artist of King Mentuhotep, seems to suggest, in its candid pride of skill, that the craft of the sculptor had become rather an uncommon thing in Egypt, a mystery known to few. Mertisen tells us that he was one who 'knew the mystery of the divine word, an artist skilled in his art. I know . . . how to produce the forms of going forth and returning, so that the limb may go to its place. I know the walking of the image of man, the carriage of a woman . . . the poising of the arm to bring the hippopotamus low, the going of the runner. . . . No one succeeds in it but I alone, and the eldest son of my body. God has decreed him to excel in it, and I have seen the perfections of his hands in the work of chief artist in every kind of precious stones, of gold and silver, of ivory and ebony.'

Mertisen's successors more than kept up the tradition of his skill. The sculpture which has survived from the great reigns of the Twelfth Dynasty, such as those of Senusert III. and Amenemhat III., is characterized by extraordinary power and dignity. It is impossible to imagine anything which expresses the sense of power, coupled perhaps with that of the bitter weariness of power, more forcibly than the grey granite statues of Senusert III., which were found in the Mentuhotep Temple at Deir-el-Bahri, and of which one is now in the British Museum; while the characterization is no less striking in the many statutes of Amenemhat III. which are extant, some of them wrought in the most intractable of materials, but almost all marked by genuine artistic power, as well as by great technical and manipulative ability. The great 'Sesostris,' who extended the boundaries of Egypt, and the beneficent 'Lamares,' who consolidated what his predecessor had gained, and

blessed his land with her greatest ancient irrigation scheme, are fittingly immortalized for us by the art of the age which they ennobled.

Possibly the best evidence for the prosperity and security of the kingdom during the Twelfth Dynasty is given by the quality of the jewellery which has been discovered in the tombs of the princesses of this period. The Dahshur find has already been alluded to (p. 83). It was supplemented, in 1914 and 1920, by Petrie's discovery at Lahun of the jewellery of the Princess Sat-Hathor-ant. The inlaid pectorals of this princess even surpassed, in beauty of design, the famous pectorals of Dahshur; while one can scarcely imagine anything more admirable in dignified simplicity of design, and in beauty of execution, than the diadem, with its golden uræus, headed with lapis lazuli, and its tall golden plumes, which rose from the back of the circlet, and quivered with every motion of the wearer. Such work is not only the product of an age to which prosperity and security had brought the love of luxury and display; it speaks of a time when luxury was still restrained by purity of taste, and the spirit of art had not yet become corrupted and degenerate. It is sufficient to contrast the jewellery of Dahshur and Lahun with some of the later work of the late Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, such as the clumsy and tasteless earrings of Ramses XII., to appreciate the difference between art which is great and art which is merely pretentious, and between design which exists for the sake of beauty and design which exists merely for purposes of ostentations. It is not merely a cultured age which gives us such work as that of the sculpture and jewellery of the Middle Kingdom; it is a great, as distinguished from a grandiose age. 'The language of this age and its literary products,' says Professor Breasted, 'were in later times regarded as

classic, and, in spite of its excessive artificialities, the judgment of modern study confirms that of the Empire.' Indeed it is only in extent of territory that the Egypt of the New Empire, even in its most flourishing days, can claim to exceed the Egypt of the Middle Kingdom. In material well-being, in artistic power, and in its literary spirit, the time of the Twelfth Dynasty has a fair claim to be regarded as the true Golden Age of Egypt. The fragments of Minoan 'Kamares' ware found at Kahun in the town of the pyramid-builders of Senusert II. (p. 76) show that Egypt, in this active and strenuous age, was in full communication with the great Cretan culture, which she had perhaps helped to create long ago in the earliest days of the Old Kingdom.

The many unsolved problems relating to the period of the Hyksos invasion, usurpation, and expulsion include one which is from many points of view the most interesting of them all—the question of whether the great event of Egyptian history, known as the Expulsion of the Hyksos, may not be the Egyptian version of the great event of Hebrew History, known as the Exodus from Egypt. Josephus* believed the two events to be the same thing, viewed from opposite standpoints, and several modern scholars, notably Dr. H. R. Hall, maintain that he was right. The problem of the Exodus, strictly speaking, lies beyond the limits of a short history of ancient Egypt; but in view of the natural interest which is excited by the matter a short summary of the position as regards the different theories may not be out of place. Roughly speaking, there are at present three theories in the field as to the date of the Exodus. Actually there are five; but Professor Eerdmans' theory that it took place somewhere during the latter part of the Twentieth Dynasty, under one of the weak Ramesside Pharaohs, presents insuperable chronological difficulties,

* 'C. Apion,' i. 14, *sq.*

and may be ruled out on that score; while Mr. Weigall's theory that it happened in the reign of Tutankhamen is probably merely an acute example of the 'Tutankhamenitis' prevalent in 1923, and has found no serious support. In the first place, we have the Expulsion of the Hyksos theory just referred to; in the second, we have the view that the Exodus took place during the reign of Amenhotep II., say about 1446 B.C., and that in the Habiru, whose attacks on vassal Egyptian cities in Palestine are recorded in the Tell-el-Amarna Letters, we have the conquering Hebrews, entering upon their heritage in the Land of Promise; in the third, we have what may be called the old theory—that the deliverance of Israel took place during the reign of Merenptah of the Nineteenth Dynasty, after the Hebrews had built the 'store-cities,' Pithom and Raamses, for the great builder-king Ramses II., who would thus be the Pharaoh of the Oppression. The first of these views, though maintained by the great authority of Dr. Hall, and in itself perhaps the most tempting theory of all, especially in view of the fact that it was held by Josephus, seems to present chronological difficulties too great for us to be able to accept it as the solution of the problem, or rather it might be better to say, as the whole truth of the matter. The second, or Amenhotep II. and Habiru theory, has been for some time the favourite, and has on its side such outstanding facts as that Merenptah, on his 'Triumph' Stele, speaks of Israelities as being in Palestine, and as being conquered by him at a time (his fifth year) when, according to the Merenptah theory, the Exodus could scarcely have taken place, and that if the Habiru are not the Israelites the work which they are represented as doing is of much the same type as that which the Israelites did. This view, which of late years has gained increasing support, has been stated with great fulness and ability by the

Rev. J. W. Jack in a recent volume. In spite, however, of all the ingenuity with which it has been supported, it seems next to impossible that this, any more than the Hyksôs theory, can be the whole truth about the Exodus.

To begin with, the holders of the Amenhotep II. date have never honestly faced the question of how their theory of an Israelite occupation as early as the time of Akhenaten can be reconciled with the overwhelming archæological evidence for a widespread Egyptian dominance in Palestine in the early days of the Nineteenth Dynasty under Sety I. and Ramses II. The customary way of disposing of this argument is an airy assertion that the Egyptian dominance in the Nineteenth Dynasty was merely the occupation of the great war-road along the Maritime Plain and on to the Orontes Valley, and that it in nowise involved any mastery of the hinterland; but this position can only be maintained by resolutely ignoring positive facts, such as those revealed in Sety's Beth-shean stele, and the unquestionable maintenance of strong Egyptian posts at places such as Beth-shean from the early Nineteenth Dynasty till the Philistine capture of the place nearly three centuries later. Further, when the narrative of the Habiru attacks, and that of the Hebrew conquest, as related in the Book of Joshua, are actually laid side by side, the differences between the two series of events become far more marked than the resemblances. 'There is,' says Dr. R. A. S. Macalister, 'a complete lack of any coincidence of detail. If we had lost the Book of Joshua, we could not recover its narrative from the Amarna Letters. Thus, where both narratives name kings of specific towns, their names are quite different in the two documents.' Indeed, it is safe to say that no candid reader, coming without prepossessions to the study of the Amarna Letters and the Book of Joshua side by side,

would ever dream that the two sets of documents referred to the same series of events.

One more point of great importance seems to have emerged from the American excavations at Beth-shean, which, if its apparent significance is confirmed by closer study, must prove as disconcerting for the Habiru-Hebrew theory of the Exodus as the Triumph stele of Merenptah did for the Merenptah theory. This is the statement of Mr. Clarence S. Fisher, that on the stele of Ramses II., found at Beth-shean, 'quite casually tucked away in the midst of all this flowery language, was one short line of immense importance to us; a simple statement that Rameses used Semites in the building of his name-city in the Delta.' 'Have we not here at last,' comments Mr. Fisher, 'that long-sought-for confirmation of the Biblical record of the labour of the Children of Israel in the land of Egypt, when they were forced under task-masters to "build for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Rameses?" This would definitely establish Rameses II. as the Pharaoh of the Oppression, an old identification that has persisted in spite of weighty opposition.' Mr. Fisher's optimism is perhaps premature, as no complete study of the inscription in question has yet appeared; but should the provisional reading on which he founds be confirmed, there must inevitably be a shifting of ground in the discussion.

Yet this does not necessarily mean that, even in such a case, the Merenptah theory must be accepted, any more than its rival, as the whole truth about the Exodus; for Merenptah's Triumph stele tells us, as plainly as words can tell, of Israelites in regular occupation of part of Palestine at a time when it was a physical impossibility for them to have been there on the supposition of an Exodus in his reign—that is, supposing this to have been the sole Exodus from Egypt; and it has become plain that even though the Amenhotep II. date should be dis-

credited to some extent, the later date will still not be in much better case than its opponent. Dr. Macalister's summary gives a sane view of the matter from the point of view of one who has always been open to hear evidence from either side. 'To sum up, we have three possible correlations of the Exodus story with historical events which excavation in Egypt has revealed to us; but all three are involved in difficulties, through which without further light it is impossible to see our way. If we take the Hyksos expulsion as representing the Exodus we shall find it impossible to explain the condition of things which exists in the Tell-el-Amarna period, with any conservation of the Biblical story whatsoever. If we choose the Amarna period as being the time of the Exodus, the details will be found quite irreconcilable, although the broad outlines are not dissimilar. If we return to the old theory of Ramessu II. and Merneptah, we must explain the "Israel" stele of Merneptah in some more satisfactory way than has yet been discovered, and we must also explain how the Israelites hoped to get away from the sway of an oppressor who maintained a great fortress in the middle of the land to which they were fleeing.'

Indeed, it is becoming tolerably plain to anyone who is not irrevocably committed to any one of the competing theories that the evidence is not yet extant which can give a complete victory to any single one of them. May it not be that there is a certain element of truth in them all? One thing has become quite manifest from the contribution of the various Egyptian discoveries to the problem—namely, that the Biblical account of the Exodus and the Conquest of Canaan cannot possibly be the whole story of the way in which the Hebrew race obtained possession of their Promised Land, but must be the account only of a part of the process, and quite possibly the latest part of it. If there is any truth in the Egyptian evidence at all, then we

must come to the conclusion that 'conquest' is not the term which should be applied to the great movement which finally made Palestine the land of the Hebrews; though it may fittingly be given to one phase, or even more than one, of the movement. The Hebrew occupation of Palestine must, on the Egyptian evidence, have been rather a process than an event, an infiltration rather than a conquest. It was in process of accomplishment, on the face of the Egyptian records, for generations, perhaps for centuries. Josephus may quite well have been stating a fact when he identified the expelled Hyksos with his own race, though he confused one great event in the history of the race with another of much later date. For there may well have been men among the expelled Hyksos, who, if not strictly Hebrews in name, were of the same stock and blood as the Hebrews. The Habiru of the Amarna period may well have been the forerunners of the later invasion under Joshua, doing in a more desultory and guerilla fashion the preparatory work for the more thoroughly organized conquest of which the Book of Joshua tells; so that Israelites were well established in certain parts of Palestine before Merenptah made his raid upon them in 1220 B.C. or so. Finally, men of Hebrew stock may have remained in Egypt, as the names of the cities in the first chapter of Exodus suggest, and as the Beth-shean stele of Ramses II. would seem also to assert, until the reign of Merenptah, may have found their way to the desert and freedom under the leadership of Moses, and may have entered Palestine after their wanderings some time after 1190 B.C. when the great invasion of the Sea-peoples, though defeated by Ramses III., had reduced the land to a state of chaos, in which united opposition to the new wave of incomers was impossible. At the same time the future rivals of Israel for the Land of Promise were settling in the Maritime Plain, and forming the beginnings of that

Philistine League which was to be so sharp a thorn in the flesh of Israel in days to come.

No solution of the problem of the Exodus can ever be satisfactory which does not face all the facts instead of basing itself on a careful selection of some and ignoring of others; and one of the prime facts of the case is that the Hebrews did not simply enter Palestine at one particular date, and in a single body, but were entering it and taking possession of portions of it, probably in many different bodies, during a period which, if we reckon only from the reign of Amenhotep II. to that of Merenptah, must have lasted for over two centuries, and if we reckon from the Expulsion of the Hyksos, lasted for nearly four. The Exodus narrative is an example of what Dr. Hogarth, in another connection, has described as 'the true saga spirit, foreshortening history by crystallizing a process into a single event.' What it tells of the Hebrew deliverance and conquest is doubtless perfectly true, so far as it goes; but a vast deal happened to men of the Hebrew stock in Palestine, long before the time of Moses and Joshua, of which the Biblical documents take no account.

We return from this long but necessary digression to the consideration of the history of the Empire as seen in the light of modern study. It is hardly necessary to add to what has already been briefly said (pp. 117-119) as to the relationships of the first three bearers of the name Tahutmes or Thothmes and Queen Hatshepsut. Here is one of the latest reconstructions of the course of events in what, if this story is true, must have been one of the most hectic periods on record. Its sponsor, Mr. R. Engelbach, remarks of it, not unnaturally or unnecessarily: 'Even this complicated sequence does not absolutely explain all the observed facts, and it is still a matter of conjecture how such a state of things arose.' The 'complicated sequence' (a mild term for it) is as follows:

1. Tuthmôsis I. (Thothmes I.) either abdicates or is suppressed.

2. Tuthmôsis III. reigns alone, possibly as a child, protected by a strong party.

3. Hatshepsôwet's party forces her upon Tuthmôsis III. as co-regent; he may have acquiesced since, by marrying the heiress, he would make his title secure.

4. After Tuthmôsis III. had been on the throne some six years in all, Tuthmôsis I. and II. seize the throne, but are unable to make Tuthmôsis III. relinquish his claims on it.

5. Tuthmôsis I. dies, and a co-regency of Tuthmôsis II. and III. follows, which lasts till Tuthmôsis II.'s death two years later.

6. Hatshepsôwet and Tuthmôsis III. rule together for twelve years, until the former either dies or is forced to retire.

7. Tuthmôsis III. rules alone, and cuts out the names of the queen and her supporters wherever he finds them.

And all this within a period which cannot have been more than thirty-five years! Things may have happened with this delightful simplicity in the Egypt of 1514-1479 B.C.—or in Bedlam!

With regard to the story of the Empire, as told in the previous chapters (vi. *sq.*), the main point on which the trend of modern study might induce a shift of emphasis is the reign of Akhenaten, which is gradually coming to be recognized both by those who admire and those who despise the 'heretic king' as probably the cardinal point of the history, not of Egypt alone, but of the whole ancient East. For good or for evil, the religious revolution set on foot by Akhenaten, with its implications in regard to the foreign policy of Egypt, changed the whole balance of power in the near East, and set in motion

forces whose international significance was not to be exhausted for centuries. 'It can hardly be doubted,' says Dr. Stanley Cook, 'that the reign of Akhenaten marks a turning-point, not only in Egyptian history, but also in the wider history of the ancient world.' The growing recognition of this fact has induced an output of literature with regard to the period, and especially with regard to its central figure, which has grown with amazing rapidity of late years, and shows no sign of diminution. No small proportion of the published work has concerned the personal character of the central figure, Akhenaten, and opinion as to whether he was a hero and a saint or a half-crazy fanatic is as sharply divided as ever. On the whole, I see little reason to alter the brief estimate of pp. 191, 192 to any extent, though, if there were to be any alteration, it would probably be in the direction of putting somewhat higher the courage and vision of the man who set himself against all the traditions of the past and the main forces of the present in the interests of what he believed to be truth. He may have been mistaken—that is not the point—yet the world has never had so many men who are brave enough to put conviction first, no matter what the cost to themselves, that it can afford to despise one of the very first who ever did so. All the discussion as to Akhenaten's personal character, however, has comparatively little bearing on the actual narrative of the times. Men have differed about this man for a matter of 3,300 years, and will probably continue to differ to the end of time. 'The truth is,' says Dr. Cook, 'that Akhenaten is precisely one of those figures that tempt writers to go to extremes; and the excessive enthusiasm on the part of some will probably account for the occasionally rather irascible and quite unscientific and prejudiced onslaughts of others.' We may leave it at that; it has long ceased to matter to Akhenaten what people think of him,

and it makes less than no difference to the course of history.

What is of importance, however, is the question of whether the faith of Akhenaten was a movement in the direction of spiritualizing religion, as is stated on p. 172, or quite the opposite—a movement towards the materializing of it. The universalism of Atenism is acknowledged by all; but recently Professor Kurt Sethe, followed in this country by Dr. Aylward Blackman, has endeavoured to persuade us that Akhenaten's creed, instead of being a more spiritual conception of deity, was decidedly a more material one than the Egyptians had previously been accustomed to. The suggestion is that Akhenaten's new diety was simply the sun-disk, and by no means, as had been believed, the vital force behind the disk. 'It was the actual cosmic body,' says Dr. Blackman, 'the physical sun itself, not a mysterious power incorporated in it or working through it, which Okhnaton made his subjects worship.' Indeed, on this view, Akhenaten was not the purifier, but the corrupter of religion; and the controversy between him and the priests of the ancient Egyptian faiths was a controversy between men who were true to the older and more spiritual ideals of their national faith, and a reactionary who was striving to lower the whole standard of religion throughout his world. 'Okhnaton's materialistic conception of the Aten was entirely opposed,' says Dr. Blackman, 'to the much more spiritual conception of the Sun-god formulated by the theologians of the old religion.' Such a view, if maintained and justified, would, of course, modify our whole idea of Akhenaten and his work, and leave him rather less than nothing to account for the reputation which he has acquired of recent years as a noble, even if a mistaken reformer, who sacrificed all his worldly interests to his zeal for the spirituality of religion.

It is difficult, however, to take such a contention

seriously. 'The more spiritual conceptions of the Sun-god formulated by the theologians of the old religion' are not unknown to us—some of them may be found in Chapter XVII.—and, if Atenism is to be considered as a decline below the barren materialism of such views, then such words as spiritual and material have ceased altogether to have the meanings ordinarily ascribed to them. Further, in the light of what is known about the existing theology associated with the Sun-god in Egypt, if Akhenaten only wished to introduce the worship of one natural force in greater intensity, what reason can be given for the fierceness of his intolerance on the one hand, and for the stubbornness of the resistance which he met on the other? Both of these matters are utterly incomprehensible save on the ground that what Akhenaten was trying to accomplish was not merely a more complete devotion to the worship of the sun-disk, already a familiar object of worship in Egypt for two millenniums, but a revolution in which something intangible, and, to the common mind, incomprehensible, was offered in place of the material and comprehensible deity of the past.

In this connection it should be noted that the sentence on p. 193, 'So little effect had Akhenaten's reformation really produced, and so early were its traces destined to pass away,' ought perhaps to have the qualification added to it—'so far as material results are concerned.' It is scarcely fair to Atenism to assume that its spiritual results were so entirely lost. From the time of Akhenaten onwards for several generations there comes into the utterances of Egyptian religion a note which had scarcely ever been heard there before. One of the most curious features of the old religion of the Egyptians is its almost total lack of the consciousness of sin, and of the sense of need for deliverance from sin—a feature which has persisted in the character of the native Egyptian to the present day. One

looks in vain for anything in Egyptian religion in the least corresponding to the avowals of personal responsibility and penitence for sin which are met with in Babylonian or Assyrian religious texts, and still more markedly, of course, in the Hebrew Psalter. There is just one period, however, when we find the religious Egyptian conscious of the burden of sin, and anxious to be delivered from it; and that period is immediately after Atenism had made its great venture, and the swell of the storm had not yet subsided. It is only then that one meets, in the religious literature of Egypt, utterances which would, indeed, be nothing uncommon in the Hebrew Scriptures, but are phenomenal in the setting where we find them. 'Punish me not for my many sins,' says the author of a prayer preserved in the Anastasi Papyrus. 'I am one ignorant of his own body, I am a man without understanding. All day I follow after my own dictates as the ox after his fodder.' One would imagine that one was catching an echo from the Hebrew Psalmist, 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant.'

Breasted's estimate of the religious position in Egypt during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries before Christ does justice, and not more than justice, to the influence of a movement which is often regarded as having issued in unrelieved failure. 'The surviving influence of the Aton faith and the doctrines of social justice of the Feudal Age now culminated, therefore, in the profoundest expression or revelation, of the devotional religious spirit ever attained by the men of Egypt.' A movement of which that can be said surely did not spend itself in vain.

Professor Sethe has also been responsible for an attack on the position, generally held after Professor Elliot Smith's examination of the bones found in the so-called tomb of Queen Tyi, that these were the bones of Akhenaten himself, and that consequently the great reformer

died at an age probably not much exceeding twenty-six or thirty years. Mr. Weigall, however, now the sole survivor of those concerned with the discovery of the tomb and mummy, has given very cogent reasons for continuing to believe that the bones are those of Akhenaten—'The mummy lay in the coffin of Akhenaton, was enclosed in bands inscribed with Akhenaton's name, and was accompanied by the canopic jars of Akhenaton. It was that of a man of Akhenaton's age, the facial structure corresponds to the portraits of Akhenaton, and it has physical characteristics similar to those of Akhenaton's father and grandfather. How, then, can one possibly doubt its identity?'

The whole history of the period has had a great amount of light cast upon it by the beginnings of the decipherment of the Hittite records found by Winckler at Boghaz-keui, the Hittite capital. There has been no more interesting revelation of the tortuous course of ancient Oriental diplomacy than that which has been given of the dealings of Shubbiluliuma, the great king of the Hittites, and the builder of their short-lived empire, with Mitanni, Nukhashshi, and the other surrounding states, and the shady ways in which he tricked or forced them into positions of dependence. The Hittite king could fight when necessary; but he preferred to gain his object, not by fighting himself, but by making other people fight for him, while they imagined they were fighting for themselves. It seems almost a pity that after such an expenditure of diplomatic skill and such an amount of ingenious lying Shubbiluliuma should not have been able to secure for his empire a longer lease of life than a bare two centuries; but the fates were against him, and the old intriguer had come into the field of world-conflict too late for his unquestionable ability to win a lasting tenure of the prize for which he strove with such indomitable persistence.

A short history of Egypt is not the place for any discus-

sion of the details of Mr. Howard Carter's great find in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes—one of the most remarkable and certainly one of the most sensational discoveries ever made in a land which has been rich in such discoveries. Never, in all the history of Egyptological research, has there been a find of such extraordinary abundance; and, merely from the point of the bullion-value of the objects discovered, the treasure of Tutankhamen's tomb must be of unexampled richness. In the end, we shall probably find that the supreme value of the find lies, not in any new historical facts which it brings before us, but in the amount of superb material which it provides for the study of Egyptian art and craftsmanship at a period which comes so shortly after the culmination of the imperial glory of the Pharaohs. So far as purely historical information goes, the tomb of Tutankhamen has apparently singularly little to tell us. The high-strung expectations which were born of the excited imaginations of journalists who knew nothing of the history of Egypt before the discovery, and not much more after it—expectations of a complete revisal of our ideas of the period, and of the substitution for the meagre outlines which had hitherto done duty for the history of the reign of Tutankhamen of a brilliant picture of Egypt triumphantly renewing her youth after her downfall under Akhenaten, and rising to magnificent heights of world-power and artistic mastery—these have all vanished. They were never more than the froth of the discovery, and the bubbles have burst on the first contact with the actual facts.

In point of fact, little more is known of Tutankhamen and his reign, now that his tomb has been ransacked, than was stated on pp. 192, 193, before it was heard of. We knew that Tutankhamen can scarcely have been more than a boy when he came to the throne; and now that his mummy has been examined we know that for certain, as

it appears that he cannot have been much more than eighteen years of age when he died. We knew that his reign must have been a very short one, probably no more than nine years at the utmost; and we know no more than that still. We knew that there was no mention on any inscription of his reign of any child of his; now we know, but not from anything found in his tomb, that there were no children to mention. We knew also, as stated on p. 193, that to all appearance he made some attempt to recover something of the Egyptian dominion in Palestine; and nothing has been added to our knowledge in that respect. Indeed, no one who knows anything of Egyptian funerary customs would ever expect that, save by some lucky and most unusual chance, any historical information should be forthcoming from a royal tomb. The inscriptions of the tomb were not for the ends of history at all; they were for the benefit of the dead man on his journey through the underworld.

But, if expectations which need never have been cherished have been disappointed in this respect, in all other respects the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb is an event of the first magnitude and importance. For the first time a Pharaoh of the Empire has been found lying in his practically unrifled tomb; and we now have some idea of the splendour with which the Egyptian throne was surrounded. Hitherto no tomb had given us any such revelation; for, though Amenhotep II. was discovered lying in his sarcophagus, his tomb had not only been rifled, but had been made a dumping-ground for other Pharaohs in later days, when tomb-robbing became one of the main trades of the dying capital of Egypt.

It is, of course, to be regretted that the Pharaoh thus discovered should not have been one of the mighty kings of the Empire, but only a third-rate little kinglet, whose ephemeral reign was merely a stop-gap in the interval between the

disasters of the reign of Akhenaten and the recovery under the strong kings of the early Nineteenth Dynasty. One turns from the magnificence of Tutankhamen's funerary equipment with the grudging thought—'If such were the glories of a king of straw like Tutankhamen, what must we not have missed by never having seen the splendours of the great Emperors, like Amenhotep III.?' Yet, even so, it is something to be able to realize for the first time what royal state meant even in a time when Egypt was fallen and cut short. 'Now, therefore, send me much gold,' cry the greedy kings of the east to Amenhotep III. and Akhenaten, 'for in my brother's land gold is as common as dust.' We might imagine that we understood a little of the actual wealth which must have inspired such a belief; actually we had no conception of the golden splendour which surrounded a Pharaoh, until we learned of the two great coffins sheathed in beaten gold, and the third, not sheathed alone, but of solid gold throughout, and the amazing head mask, of gold, lapis-lazuli, carnelian, and coloured glaze, which covered the features of the dead boy-king. If Egypt, after all the losses and humiliations of Akhenaten's time, could afford such splendour for the burial of one of the least of her kings, imagination stumbles at the very thought of the glories of her prime!

Probably we shall find that the supreme importance of the discovery lies in its relation to our knowledge of Egyptian art. There is no period in the art history of the land which presents a more interesting subject of study than the Amarna Age. We begin to see now that the art of the Amarna period was not, as used to be supposed, an excrescence, somewhat ungainly and unattractive, upon the dignified art of Egypt; but that, on the contrary, it was a natural growth, which had its roots deep down in the Egyptian love of nature, and was fostered and revivi-

fied by the tendencies of Akhenaten's new doctrine, with its insistence upon Truth as the cardinal requirement of life and art, and its loving appreciation of the charm of natural life of all kinds. Amarna art is the fulness of the expression of these natural tendencies of Egyptian art, touched with a spirit of refinement which is characteristic in growing degree of the period of Imperial expansion, enriched by contact with the art of Asia and Crete, yet never servilely borrowing from foreign sources, but always true to its national genius. And the art of Tutankhamen's funerary equipment is Amarna art in all essentials, exhibiting, perhaps, a little of that tendency to over-elaboration and complication of design which is characteristic of an art which has just passed its meridian, and is on the edge of the decline, but still of marvellous vitality and beauty, apart altogether from any question of the richness of its materials. The quality of the examples which it offers us is by no means uniform. Some of the work is almost unsurpassable, both for beauty of design and for skill of execution; some of it is frankly vulgar in its ostentatious disregard of the principles of good design, however admirable may be the craftsmanship with which the design is carried out. Of such vulgarisms, the most conspicuous were the extraordinary alabaster vases, of most complicated design, which were acclaimed by some people who might have known better as 'the most beautiful vases in the world!' Actually, they rank artistically with the vases of Derbyshire spar, and the bouquets of wax flowers, which our grandmothers used to preserve carefully under glass shades of wonderful ugliness.

Apart from such barbarisms, of which all periods have been guilty, the quality of the art of Egypt in 1350 B.C., as revealed in the tomb of Tutankhamen, must rank very high, while the craftsmanship of the period is in nowise inferior to the highest Egyptian standard, which is as

much as to say that no land has ever surpassed it, and few have equalled it.

The most striking piece of historical information with regard to this troubled period after Akhenaten's death comes, as already mentioned, not from Tutankhamen's tomb, but from one of the Hittite records of Boghaz-keui. The author of the account in question is probably Murshilish II., the son of Shubbiluliuma, and the Queen Dakhamun of Egypt who is mentioned is probably Ankh. s. en. pa. aten, daughter of Akhenaten, and wife of Tutankhamen. It is a little difficult to square the dates in the equation, and the names Dakhamun and Ankh. s. en. Amen (the later form of Ankh. s. en. pa. aten's name) offer philological difficulties to their identification; but the position is so remarkably like that in which Tutankhamen's queen was left by his early death that it seems highly probable that the reference is to her. When Tutankhamen died, the position of Ankh. s. en. Amen must have been one of great difficulty and danger. Her husband had secured himself and her for the time by his apostasy from the cause of Atenism (if he had any share in this other than the forced assent of a mere child); but his death left her exposed to the attacks of the triumphant priesthood of Amen, to whom she must have been objectionable in the highest degree, as the daughter of their great enemy. Probably she recognized in the moment of her husband's death, that there was 'but a step between her and death.' Accordingly she seems to have taken advantage of the seventy days required for the process of mummification, during which it was not likely that her enemies would dare to strike, to send a letter to Shubbiluliuma, who was then campaigning at Carchemish, informing him of the death of Tutankhamen, and suggesting a marriage between herself and one of the sons of the Hittite king. The relative part of her letter is worth quoting.

The Hittite king introduces it thus: 'Then their ruler, namely Bib-khuru-riyas' (possibly a Hittite transmogrification of one of Tutankhamen's titles Neb-kheperu-ra), 'just at that moment died; now the Queen of Egypt was Dakhamun . . . she sent an ambassador to my father: she said thus to him, "My husband is dead: I have no children; your sons are said to be grown up; if to me one of your sons you give, and if he will be my husband, he will be a help; send him accordingly and thereafter I will make him my husband. I send bridal gifts."'

One is tempted to speculate as to the changes which might have followed in the ancient history of the near East if this straightforward proposal of marriage had been promptly accepted. The chances are that what we know now as the Nineteenth Dynasty would never have occupied the throne of Egypt, but in their stead a line of Pharaohs directly descended from Akhenaten, and of half Hittite blood. The century-long strife between Egypt and Hatti would never have taken place, and Ramses II. would never have had the chance of boasting about his deeds of valour at Kadesh. Quite possibly the rise of Assyria might have been checked almost at its very beginning, and the world been spared the greater part of the blood-thirsty tyranny of Assyria under which it cowered for centuries. But it was not to be. Shubbiluliuma was a bold man, but he was also cautious; and on this occasion he was too cautious for his own interests, and above all for the safety of his correspondent. He could not realize, as she did, that speed was of the very essence of the business; and so he wasted those precious seventy days by sending messengers back and forward to ask why this, that, and the other thing was so, before he could make up his mind that the offer was genuine. At last he came to the conclusion that he might risk it, and Murshilish's story, so far as it has survived, closes with the words—'then the lady soon ful-

filled her words and selected one of the sons.' But 'then,' we may imagine, proved too late. The priests of Amen had learned of the negotiations which would put a Hittite prince, with all the might of Hatti to back him, on the throne of Egypt, to the confusion of all that they had accomplished by their reaction; and the chances are that they struck at once, and that the Hittite prince, if he ever reached Egypt, found that his promised bride had vanished, and that his cautious father had, for once, been too cautious by half. Meanwhile, of course, the story can only be provisionally associated with Akhenaten's daughter; but in itself it is by no means improbable, and it is certainly of high interest—a genuine little piece of drama to enliven the dull pages of history.

One of the valuable finds of Winckler at Boghaz-keui was a fragmentary account of the famous battle of Kadesh, which on the whole confirms, more or less, the Egyptian story. The Boghaz-keui version of the treaty of peace between the two great powers adds nothing of importance to the Egyptian version. Perhaps the statement as to the terms of perfect equality between the high contracting parties (p. 229) ought to be modified to this extent, that it was Hatti and not Egypt which first sought peace, and that a certain admission of inferiority may be inferred from the fact that Hattushilish, the Hittite king, came down personally into Egypt to see his daughter married to Ramses II. Too much stress, however, must not be laid on this, and after all, the point is a minor one.

Considerable light has been thrown upon the period of the Ethiopian Pharaohs by the excavations of the American Expedition under Dr. George Reisner. It was already well known, of course, as is manifest from Chapter XV., that the Ethiopian Pharaohs considered themselves genuine Egyptians, and perhaps held themselves to be the restorers of the true Egyptian tradition, which had been

degenerating under the aliens, Libyan and what not, who had held the throne of Egypt; but the work at Napata and Meroë has given convincing evidence of the thoroughness with which Ethiopia was permeated by the Egyptian spirit. 'It comes as a surprise to find that this Ethiopian dominion was really Egyptian in the best sense; that its kings present themselves as guardians of Egyptian civilization and traditions; that though their chief sanctuary was the temple of Amen at Napata, they were loyal worshippers of Amen at Thebes; and that under them art and literature flourished and were fresher and more vigorous than anything the Nile Valley had seen for generations.' Old Egyptian customs, such as that of pyramid burial for the kings, re-asserted themselves; and altogether the Ethiopian Dynasty represents a gallant attempt on the part of these Southerners to uphold the tottering empire of the Pharaohs. The pity was that circumstances were against them, and that their effort was broken against the iron strength of Assyria.

Such, in brief, are the outstanding additions to our knowledge of ancient Egypt, and the main modifications of previous views which have been made since the second edition of this book was issued. If nothing revolutionary has emerged, we must still recognize that there has been a considerable amount of clear gain, and that our understanding of some of the key positions of Egyptian history is being steadily clarified and made more certain as time goes on.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OVER the question of the chronology of the earlier part of the history of Egypt authorities are at present hopelessly divided. After the rise of the Eighteenth Dynasty there is a very satisfactory amount of agreement, the discrepancies amounting only to a few years at most; but before that the divergence is enormous, and there is no possibility of reconciling the two systems of dating. The conflict of authority may best be exhibited by quotation. Breasted, who advocates the shorter system, remarks as follows upon the system which he discards: 'The extremely high dates for the beginning of the dynasties current in some histories are inherited from an older generation of Egyptologists. . . . Their accuracy is now maintained only by a small and constantly decreasing number of modern scholars.' * On the opposite side Professor Flinders Petrie is equally positive. 'If anyone wishes to abandon these dates [the longer system], they must . . . treat history as a mere matter of arbitrary will, regardless of all records. As against this general position of dates there is nothing to be set in favour of any very different schemes, nothing—except the weightiest thing of all—prepossessions.'†

No attempt has been made, therefore, to assign precise dates to the earlier reigns, but the following table exhibits the two systems side by side down to 1580 B.C. There-

* 'History of Egypt,' p. 23. † 'Researches in Sinai,' p. 176.

after the agreement is so close that single dates only are given.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dynasties I. and II. | B.C. 5510—4945 | or B.C. 3400—2980. |
| Dynasty III. | „ 4945—4731 | „ 2980—2900. |
| „ IV. | „ 4731—4454 | „ 2900—2750. |
| „ V. | „ 4454—4206 | „ 2750—2625. |
| „ VI. | „ 4206—4003 | „ 2625—2475. |
| Dynasties VII. and VIII. | „ 4003—3787 | „ 2475—2445. |
| „ IX. and X. | „ 3787—3502 | „ 2445—2160. |
| Dynasty XI. | „ 3502—3459 | „ 2160—2000. |
| „ XII. | „ 3459—3246 | „ 2000—1788. |
| Dynasties XIII. to XVII. | „ 3246—1580 | „ 1788—1580. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Dynasty XVIII. | 1580—1322. |
| „ XIX. | 1322—1202. |
| „ XX. | 1202—1102. |
| „ XXI. | 1102—952. |
| „ XXII. | 952—755. |
| „ XXIII. | 755—721. |
| „ XXIV. (Bakenranf) | 721—715. |
| „ XXV. (including Piankhi and Kashta) | 748—664. |
| XXVI. | 664—525. |

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